West African female migrants in the city of Athens: Language and identity

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Abstract

This study focuses on West-African female migrant narratives. While the growing numbers of migrants and refugees have transformed Greece during the last decades, these populations are often faced with hostility and discrimination. Contrary to other migrant populations, who have pursued tactics of invisibility, the black population of Greece bears a marker of otherness. Their external visibility, which is combined with their structural invisibility, results in lives lived in precarity. The study's qualitative perspective brings to the surface hidden aspects of West-African female migrant identities. The central research question is 'How do West-African migrant women who live in Athens present themselves in their narratives?' The analytical lens adopted sees identities as constructions. They are perceived as relational and sociocultural phenomena that emerge and circulate in interaction. An approach of narratives as co-constructions functions as an overarching conceptual lens.

The dataset consists of 18 narratives, which are approached from a discourse analytic perspective. The analysis focuses on the women's discursive self-presentations alongside the presentation of their relations and social realities, based on three linguistic structures: pronominal use, spatial deixis and represented speech. The women are found to strategically manipulate these structures depending on the stories they tell, the context of their interaction with the researcher and the identities they want to project. According to the findings, pronominal choices define the role of the self in relation to others through claims of group membership, normality and knowledge; spatial deixis anchors the speakers in different worlds, and gives them the opportunity to move between 'here' and 'there' while stressing their attachment to various locations; and represented speech enables them to align with different voices while activating parts of their identities both in the story world and in the wider social context. Throughout their narratives, the women present themselves as active agents and subjects of their histories. Claims for power, acts of agency, and resistance against hegemonic discourses define their linguistic choices.

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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

: lengthening of the previous syllable

(.) a very short, still audible pause

( ) a longer pause, counted in seconds

> < fast talk

(( )) comment by the transcriber

XXX capitals indicate emphasis

[ ] the onset and the ending of simultaneous talk of two speakers

(xxx) the utterance is incomprehensible

(...) the utterance continues but this part is omitted in the presented extract from the transcript

Chapter ONE

INTRODUCTION

If Tsipra come and ask me I say God bless you Tsipra I don't want anything just paper, I will pay your tax, please open a way for us to have a paper.

I met L. in Athens during my year of fieldwork. She is in her thirties and speaks English, Greek and Buli, her mother-tongue. Despite her impressive language competence, she can neither read nor write in any language. L. comes from the North of Ghana and had been living in Greece for about ten years when I met her. When asked about her past, she narrated the journey of her life without hesitation. In official statistics, L.'s views are absent. She would be described as part of the foreign population living in Greece and holding a pink card, lacking employment and social security. For the Greek state, L. is for the most part invisible. Her status is precarious. However, her narrative tells a different story. L. looks her interlocutor in the eye, and confidently describes herself as part of the country where she lives. She has no plans of leaving whatsoever, she stresses; she has arrived at her destination. L. is married to a Ghanaian man she met in the bus in Athens and is the mother of two children who attend Greek school and speak fluent Greek. She has learned the Greek language and has worked as domestic help in households all over the city. In the quoted utterance she addresses the Greek Prime Minister at the time of the interview and asks him for legal status. L. has a voice but in the dominant Greek culture it mostly goes unheard.

1.1.Introduction

The central research question of this thesis is 'How do West-African migrant women who live in Athens present themselves in their narratives?' The research was motivated both by my academic interest and my personal background. The first one is related to my interest in narratives as descriptive of personal experience and as constitutive of realities. I am particularly intrigued by speakers' covert self-presentations and identity negotiations through the manipulation of linguistic structures in interaction. At the same time, my interest is drawn to

speakers that are silenced and narratives that remain hidden. The rise in the numbers of migrants living in Greece and the absence of their voices in mainstream discourse resulted in my wish to focus on the stories told by members of these populations.

My personal experience of living and working in West-Africa motivated me to look for the stories of migrants coming from this part of the world and living in my home country. The time I spent in the region they come from led to my deep appreciation for their cultural backgrounds and facilitated, at the same time, my contact with their migrant communities in Greece. Needless to say, there are radical differences between my experiences and their trajectories of migration. Nevertheless, my knowledge about their origin, which was not based only on theory and books but also on personal experience, created a bond of mutual acceptance, which facilitated communication.

The focus on women was a result of my experiences during the first months of fieldwork, as it became apparent, from early on, that the male West-African migrant population was hard to access. At the same time, my contact with only women created a bond of female solidarity, which could be jeopardized if I were to address the male members of their communities as well. Therefore, I decided to focus on female West-African migrants from three English-speaking countries: Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. The aim of this research is to investigate the negotiation and representation of identities in the narratives of female migrants coming from these countries, while focusing on the social processes that inform the discursive construction of identities.

This introductory chapter sets the scene and provides an overview of the thesis. It starts with a description of the research context, moves on to an overview of the research questions and key findings and concludes with a brief description of the thesis structure.

1.2. West-African women in Athens at the time of the economic crisis

The growing number of migrants and refugees residing in Greece has transformed the country in many ways in the course of the last decades. While the social relevance of migration has influenced many aspects of the local population's everyday life, the wide-spread association of migrant presence with negative impacts and social problems (Papadopoulos 2017; Kandylis 2013) has fueled xenophobic attitudes (Tsoukala 2011; Hatziprokopiou and Frangopoulos 2016), creating a hostile environment for non-Greeks. Statistics that have tried to count migrant

populations have obvious limitations, as large parts are lacking legal documentation and are, therefore, not reflected in official numbers. At the same time, while their presence in the country is often highly debated in mainstream media and extreme right political debates (Koutrolikou 2015), granting visibility to their group on the whole, migrants are usually described in stereotypical ways and little effort has been made to listen to their voices and self-presentations.

The presence of large groups of migrants in Greece dates back to the 1990s, when substantial numbers arrived from neighbouring Albania, followed by the Balkans, Central Eastern Europe and the former USSR. Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are quite new in Greek urban centers. No reliable numbers can be found on the size of these populations, however, a walk around central neighbourhoods of Athens makes their presence obvious not only physically but also through their influence on the linguistic landscape of the city, as for example through the signs indicating the shops they run and the commercial activities they pursue (Scollon and Scollon 2003). Apart from stating the presence of African migrants in the city, these signs reflect the superdiverse environment Athens has been transformed into, showing a remarkable social, cultural and linguistic diversity (Vertovec 2007). At the same time, these signs are not only reflections of the existent dynamics; they are constructive of social realities, as they are playing the role of social agents and affect the social life of the city (cf. Blommaert 2013a).

Contrary to other migrant populations who have pursued tactics of invisibility and assimilation, the black population of Greece bears an external marker of otherness. The difference of their bodies is read off their surface (Ahmed 2004) and normative definitions of Greekness exclude them *per se*. Therefore, they are extremely visible as Others while being, at the same time, invisible as people with rights. This status enhances the precarity they face, resulting in insecurity and vulnerability (Lazaridis and Konsta 2011). These structures existed long before the economic crisis, however, the austerity measures imposed after 2008 and the resulting high unemployment rates further increased the discrimination migrants face. The aforementioned combination of extreme visibility and structural invisibility puts the participants of this study in a complicated position, as they navigate their everyday lives and claim their right to exist in their country of residence, despite the often hostile environment they are surrounded with. The study's qualitative perspective brings to the surface aspects of their identities that remain hidden in the aforementioned conditions of suppression, by focusing on the participants' self-presentations, while taking into consideration the wider social context of their lives.

1.3. Research questions and key findings

The central research question of this thesis is 'How do West-African migrant women who live in Athens present themselves in their narratives?' The analytical lens adopted sees identities as constructions. They are perceived as relational and sociocultural phenomena that emerge and circulate in interaction (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 585-586), influenced by the psychobiographical self-conception of the speaker (Agha 2007: 233) and his/her positioning in relation to other social actors (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 598). The dataset consists of stories told by nineteen women during semi-structured interviews, which took place after an extensive period of familiarization. While the researcher suggested some topics of discussion, she encouraged the women to talk about the themes which interested them, therefore adapting to her interlocutors' interactional goals, providing them with the space they needed in order to construct their identities. During these interviews, the majority of the participants narrated parts of their life stories and trajectories of migration. These narratives were then approached from a discourse analytic perspective. The aim was to combine an analysis of the micro-structures of interaction and the macro-structures of the participants' social environments. In order to reach this goal, the study adopted a theoretical framework which defines storytelling as a situated discursive practice (Fairclough 1989), resting on socially shared conceptions and ideologies (van Dijk 1998), while narratives are seen as a possible means of resistance used by dominated groups against hegemonic discourse (van Dijk 2009). In the course of their analysis narratives are, therefore, approached not only as talk-in-interaction, but at the same time as social practice (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008) and the analysis of the participants' self-presentations is combined with a structural approach of the mechanisms which are at work and position the interlocutors in various ways.

Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the study focuses on the women's discursive self-presentations alongside the presentation of their relations and social realities, and the ways these are reflected in the narrative construction of their identities. The analysis is based on three linguistic structures: pronominal use, spatial deixis and represented speech. According to the findings, the women strategically manipulate these structures depending on the stories they tell, the context of their interaction with the researcher and the identities they want to project, establishing connections between the linguistic structures they employ, the story worlds they narrate and the social worlds they inhabit. While pronominal choices are crucial in defining the role of the self in relation to others through claims of group membership, normality and knowledge, spatial deixis anchors the women in different worlds, and gives them the

opportunity to move between 'here' and 'there' while stressing their attachment to various places and pairing emotions with deictics and toponyms. Finally, represented speech enables the participants to align with different voices while activating certain parts of their identities both in the story world and in the wider social context. Throughout their narratives, the women are found to present themselves as active agents and subjects of their histories. Claims for power and acts of agency define their linguistic choices, while they stress an image of themselves as strong people, who are in charge of their lives. An approach of narratives as co-constructions functions as an overarching conceptual lens that informs the analysis of all three linguistic structures.

1.4. Thesis structure

The following chapter outlines the study's theoretical framework. In the beginning it positions the research in the field of linguistic ethnography. It then provides an analysis of the study's approach to identity and its relation to power and agency and moves on to presenting language in the context of migration. The concept of (linguistic) citizenship is introduced before moving on to language ideologies and their influence on language learning and use. A brief overview of language(s) and the Greek state is also provided.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the study's methodological principles and includes a description of the immigration landscape of Greece and an analysis of African diaspora alongside a brief overview of language(s) in the Sub-Saharan context. It then moves on to a presentation of the study's field and an overview of the methodological tools employed. Reflections on my positionality as a researcher and its methodological implications are also provided.

Chapters Four, Five and Six explore the use of the three linguistic structures from a discourse analytic perspective. In Chapter Four I analyse the participants' pronominal choices with a focus on the first person plural pronoun *we*. I approach pronouns as complex signs which function as identity markers, indexing group membership together with social and cultural meaning, and relating the participants to different groups on occasion. Processes of normativity, claims for belonging, presentation of experiences, and ascription of characteristics to the self and the other are found to influence to the women's positioning through their pronominal choices.

Chapter Five focuses on spatial deixis. After a discussion of the role of indexicality in the linguistic representation of space in narratives and its relation to identity claims, the chapter first examines the manipulation of spatial deixis with a focus on the adverb *here* and then moves on to analyse the discursive strategy of naming places while associating them with narrative identities.

Chapter Six explores the use of speech representation in relation to the construction of situated identities. An overview of the implications of direct reported speech on narratives is followed by the identification of three recurrent themes in the data under analysis: racist verbal attacks, language competence and stories of self-disclosure. The chapter argues that the women shift perspectives and assign speaker roles to the characters involved in their stories in order to claim identities for themselves and assign characteristics to their interlocutors. Through the analysis they are shown to create complex networks of contact and interaction, which, similar to the structures analysed so far, are related to claims of belonging, power and agency.

The last chapter brings together the findings of the data analysis chapters, presents the conclusions of the study and points to orientations for further research. Before moving on to the study's methodological framework, the following chapter introduces the theoretical framework adopted throughout the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Grounding this study in linguistic ethnography

This study positions itself in the field of linguistic ethnography. Among other features, ethnography is known for its ability to address complexity without trying to reduce it by focusing on a set of predefined features (Blommaert 2007a); on the contrary, an ethnographic approach allows the researcher to see "complexity and connections, to understand the history and geography of languages" (Heller 2008: 250), while getting at things which would otherwise remain hidden. A combination of frameworks coming from the disciplines of linguistics and ethnography leads to a multiplicity of methodological tools. The open, reflexive, social orientation of ethnographic frameworks is brought together with the more formal and abstract discipline of linguistics. Through this combination a formal, abstract discipline and its methods for analysing text are brought together with the more open, reflexive, social orientation of ethnographic methods, offering a complex perspective on the related social practices and structures (Rampton et al. 2004). And as an ethnographic framework should encompass complexity, setting as its goal to understand its workings, the results of ethnographic research should be "*iconic* of the object it has set out to examine" (Blommaert 2007a: 682, original emphasis). The description of the complexity of human behaviour can, in other words, only result in complex descriptions, if all factors influencing the communicative event should be taken into consideration.

This would seem to hold for this study as well. The participants, West African female migrants living in Athens, navigate space and time through complex networks of power and claim different roles in changing environments. All aforementioned factors are reflected in the material gathered, while the perspectives of the subjects are combined with macro-social "orders of interactionality" (Silverstein 2004: 621), which are historically contingent yet structured, resulting in specific forms of organisation of communicative events. These macro-social factors influence the system the participants find themselves in, as any interactional space has been partly already shaped regardless of the characteristics of those taking part in communication (Duranti 1997). According to this line of thought, the subject is an effect of

power relations, based on access to knowledge (Foucault 1980).[1] The resulting hierarchies are created and distributed according to the interests and the sociopolitical expediencies of the groups that regulate access to power (van Dijk 1998: 117). These mechanisms operate outside the context of interaction, yet they manifest themselves by shaping the communicative event (van Dijk 2009). Based on the assumption that power relations are constitutive of discourse, it can be argued that one of the main functions of language is political, as it "relates to the procedures for promoting certain decisions instead of others, as well as to the procedures for contesting and/or rebutting certain decisions" (Archakis and Tsakona 2012: 12). Moreover, history plays a decisive role in shaping discourse, with every choice we make being "partly contingent on what happened before and contributing to the definition of what will happen next" (Duranti 1997: 5).

Micro-events should, therefore, be analysed as combinations of variation and stability, being at the same time unique and structured encounters (Blommaert 2007a), created by an interplay of the characteristics of the participants and the social, historical and cultural features of the encounter. During interaction, macro-social categories of identity are, in other words, manifested micro-sociologically as indexical categories and should be seen as dialectically constituted while being oriented towards certain "indexical orders" (Silverstein 2003: 227). Therefore, any analysis of language use has to take both pragmatic and presuppositional, as well as *metapragmatic*, ideologically informed aspects (Silverstein 1993), into consideration. An anthropological perspective on language use can be fruitful, as it encompasses the aforementioned complexity while focusing on the place of language in a wider social context as well as its role in "forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures" (Foley 1997: 1) through discourse.

The concept of culture is of paramount importance in this framework, with anthropological linguistics being defined as "an interpretive discipline, peeling away at language to find cultural understandings" (Foley 1997: 3). In this context, culture is not seen as an abstract system operating regardless of the characteristics of the communicative event. It is, on the contrary, a system of symbols used by human embodied beings engaging in social action,

[1] In every society, knowledge on what is genuine, remarkable, and worth preserving is the result of a process of homogenization, based on the projected resemblances in descriptive characteristics, convictions, perceptions, approaches, and behaviours on what is considered reasonable, correct, and true (Archakis and Tsakona 2012: 15). This kind of homogenization is dependent on the dominant discourse and the mechanisms and institutions from which it emanates, with "language and meaning [being] used by the powerful to oppress and deceive the dominated" (Howarth 2000: 4).

with their thinking being primarily social and public (Geertz 1973). Cultural practices can, therefore, be described as recurrent and stable patterns of communication, transmitted across generations, a *habitus* that is not questioned by those engaging in relevant actions (Bourdieu 1977: 78-79). As the habitus is extremely complex and hard to study, research can only limit itself to the study of a certain field: "an array of positions occupied by actors competing over capital" (Hanks 1990: 14).[2] The cultural patterns, found in the aforementioned field, have been stable through generations and manifest themselves in the body of those engaging in communication (Foley 1997:13), reflecting their history, while at the same time continually reproducing it, creating a "mutual co-determination" (Foley 1997: 21) of the organism and its environment.

Language plays an important role in this context, as it mediates cultural practices, while giving them a tangible existence in communication. Therefore, language can be described as a social and cultural object, with knowledge of language necessarily understood as social and cultural knowledge (Gumperz 1972). Accordingly, every utterance bears a social component, being a sign that functions as a connector, "forming a bridge between the persons who interact, semiotically mediating relations between them, while at the same time formulating a sketch of the social occasion in which it occurs and making social relations construable as effects of its occurrence" (Agha 2007: 15). Thus, the sign and the environment in which it occurs are constitutive of each other. Consequently, anthropological linguistics seems to be a suitable framework for the study of language in broader social context, putting language in relation to culture and vice versa, while conceiving of language and culture as a single complex object (Blommaert 2007a: 685).

All aforementioned factors have influenced this study, its theoretical framework and the research questions it aims at answering. Having adopted a definition of the communicative event as a specific form of organisation, this study aims at unveiling the ways macro-social factors manifest themselves in the discourse of the participants, resulting in specific forms of narratives, as well as analysing the resources the women draw upon when navigating different orders of indexicality. Moreover, the political aspect of language will be taken into consideration, with a focus on the ways the women resist identity ascriptions while claiming certain roles for themselves by using language in a specific way. Cultural practices, power

[2] According to Hanks, participants' resources are constrained by their social position in this field, resulting in their ability to perform only a limited amount of roles during communication (Hanks 1990: 140).

relations and ideological constructions will be taken into consideration, as they have had a crucial role in shaping the data.

2.2. Language and identity: The role of power and agency

In every communicative event, identity construction plays a decisive role in mediating social and cultural patterns as it projects images of the self and the other onto the *here and now* of communication. In this study, identity is not perceived as a static and stable structure arising from fixed social categories, but rather as a flexible feature, a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that "emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 585-586),[3] linked to the persons' psychobiographical self-conception (Agha 2007: 233) and acquiring social meaning only "in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 598).[4] Therefore identities are not seen as autonomous constructions but rather as intersubjectively negotiated attributions of identity characteristics (Bucholtz and Hall 2003),[5] changing according to spatial and social factors during a person's life-span, resulting in multiple, multi-layered identities (Hobson 2003).[6] The different identities that a person takes over can be described as "fad[ing] in and out of thresholds

[3] According to the essentialist approach, identities are seen as naturalised, inherent conceptions and groups are described as "internally homogenous, clearly bounded, mutually exclusive and maintaining specific determinate interests" (Jaggar 1999: 314). Essentialism is based on the assumption that groups are clearly delimited and that group members are alike (Bucholtz 2003). This approach, which has for some time prevailed in anthropology and cultural studies, has been criticized for its simplistic and universalized assumptions about domination, as it advocates the (im)possibility of resistance, relating a person's position, views and characteristics to her/his collective identity (Knauft 1996: 255). Anti-essentialist critique has resulted in the formulation of constructivist approaches (i.e. Spivak 1987, Bhabha 1994), which leave space for complexity and polyvalence, going as far as to describe the concept of culture itself as an essentialized category (Abu-Lughod 1991). Constructivist approaches on identity have focused on ethnicity and have related invented traditions to imagined communities, which are seen as constitutive of a bond of mutual understanding and belonging (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 1983). Finally, poststructuralist approaches contest dichotomies and include a wide range of scholars like Althusser (1984), Bakhtin (1981), Derrida (1987), Foucault (1980), Kristeva (1984) and Lacan (2006 [1977]). These scholars approach the relationship of language and identity in different, often contrasting ways. However, despite their differences, they share some fundamental assumptions concerning the construction of meaning and the discursive construction of identity through the use of language not only as a reflection of reality but also as constitutive of the world the speakers inhabit.

[4] Following another distinction, researchers have claimed for the existence of 'achieved' and 'imposed' identities when referring to the ways the person sees herself/himself in contrast to the way others see her/him (Weber 2015: 51).

[5] According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 599-560), identities are constructed through several, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy. The aforementioned relations will be dealt with in data analysis.

[6] Identity in interaction is most obvious when the speakers' linguistic choices do not conform to the recipients' expectation concerning the social (i.e. Barrett 1999; Besnier 2003) and/or national category (i.e. Bucholtz 1995) s/he is normatively assigned to; i.e., when identity somehow comes to the fore as an issue.

of awareness and attachment cued by different types of interpersonal activities" (Agha 2007: 233). This approach, which views identity as produced intersubjectively and emergent during interaction (Bucholtz and Hall 2005), attributes paramount importance to context, while viewing linguistic performance as dialogic, and making structure, and subsequently culture, emergent in action as well (Hymes 1975: 71). Narratives, which are means of organizing and shaping experience and at the same time strategies for constructing and projecting identities (Archakis and Tsakona 2012: 2), have therefore a dialogic nature, as they are influenced by the communicative event while being at the same time manifestations of the aforementioned structures in interaction.

During these processes of identity ascription and (self-)identification, speakers draw on multiple voices and texts (Bakhtin 1981) to create their identities. Analysis of these voices can result in an understanding of the resources the participants draw upon, while at the same time creating an image of their trajectories through space and time (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 97). Agency, the accomplishment of social action (Ahearn 2001), plays an important role during this process. As the very use of language is itself an act of agency (Duranti 2004), identity can be defined as one kind of social action that language can accomplish. Moreover, structure and agency should not be seen as opposed characteristics but rather as intertwined components of micro and macro articulations of identity, interacting with each other during communication (i.e. Collins 1981; Giddens 1984). Given this interrelation, linguistic anthropology should, according to Duranti, find an instrument of analysis that "allows us to make previously unseen or undocumented connections between the micro-level of face-to-face verbal interaction and the macro-level of institutional statuses, roles, and identities" (Duranti 1997: 314).

As discussed above, language and identity are closely related to power. During linguistic interaction, power relations manifest themselves through differential positioning of interlocutors, with the one often being in a more powerful position and having access to more resources than the other. Language plays a decisive role in establishing and maintaining these differential power relations, as "differences live through concrete acts of speaking, the mixing of words with actions and the substitution of words *for* action" (Duranti 1997: 5, original emphasis). With "the world of any encounter [being] predefined by broader racial, gender, and class relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 144), when using language, people function inside the limits of an interactional space, which they have not formed themselves but which was defined before them, therefore bearing a past and endowed with a future (Ochs 1992). In

this interactional space, certain indicators of social identities, like for example gender, are constitutive in that "linguistic features may index social meanings, stances, social acts, social activities, which in turn help to constitute gender meanings" (Ochs 1992: 341). The constitutive power of language transcends the time of utterance production and perception by constituting past as well as future events. Ochs calls the constitution of past contexts recontextualisation and the constitution of future contexts precontextualization (Ochs 1990) and suggests that a variety of verbal practices and forms can be used to carry out these functions.

Bearing in mind these characteristics of the communicative event, it can be argued that interlocutors position themselves inside a network of relations which strongly influences not only what can and will be said but also what will remain unspoken. Based on Foucault's assumption that in every society the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures (Foucault 1984 [1971]: 109), Blommaert claims that, during communication, interactants orient themselves towards systemic patterns of indexicality "in which some forms of semiosis are systemically perceived as valuable, others as less valuable, and some are not taken into account at all, while all are subject to rules of access and regulations" (Blommaert 2007a: 117). According to his analysis, these patterns of indexicality are at the same time patterns of authority, control and evaluation, and hence mechanisms of exerting power on individuals (Blommaert 2007b). According to this line of thought, participants in a communicative event orient themselves not only towards those present in interaction but also towards a "superadressee" (Bakhtin 1981), represented by complexes of norms and perceived appropriateness criteria, by the larger social and cultural body of authority in which immediate practices are situated.[7] Identity is, therefore, constructed on the spot, and yet it is not only influenced by those present during interaction but also by those who are absent but still defining the norm.

2.3. Language in the context of migration

The participants of this study live in today's increasingly connected world, where the category of *the migrant* has become hard to define, with people crossing borders due to different

[7] All of this is largely encompassed in Hyme's notion of "communicative competence", according to which utterances should not only be grammatically possible but also psycholinguistically feasible and sociolinguistically appropriate, while, apart from knowledge, non-cognitive factors, such as motivation, should be seen as determining competence as well (Hymes 1972: 283).

motivations, following diverse trajectories, while keeping bonds with their home countries and holding multiple memberships in all kinds of national, ethnic and religious networks (Yuval-Davis 1999). At the same time, mobile technologies and social media have facilitated communication in ways that were not possible in the past, through the use of "diverse, simultaneous communicative channels" (Jacquemet 2005), creating new patterns of migration and new networks of membership and support (cf. Dekker and Engbersen 2013). Already 30 years ago Hoffmann claimed that dislocation has become the norm, "but even in the unlikely event that a person spends an entire lifetime in one place, the diverseness with which she lives reminds her constantly that she is no longer the norm or the centre, that there is no one geographic centre pulling the world together and glowing with the allure of the real thing" (Hoffman 1989 quoted in Lutz 2011: 348).

While centre and periphery are no longer perceived as clearly as in the past, these real or imagined movements of populations through space and time are coupled with their ongoing multi-stranded connections to people living in different, often geographically disconnected, parts of the world, resulting to interconnected networks (Bauman 2000) and leading to the formation of *transnational* migrant experiences and identities (Kearney 1997; Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994; Vertovec 2004; Levitt and de la Dehesa 2017) and the creation of *ethnoscapes*, a term used by Appadurai (1990: 297) to describe "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live". According to Appadurai, in this world, stabilities are "shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move" (Appadurai 1990: 222). These so-called *transcultural flows* have been described as *"*the ways in which cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts" (Pennycook 2007: 6). In this process of moving across space, migrants transform their identities in a constant procedure of re-negotiation, resulting in the creation of new cartographies of space and the consequent creation of new, hybrid images of the self and the other (De Fina 2016) through a process of take-up, appropriation, change and refashioning (Pennycook 2007). Bhabha (1994) suggests that, for migrants, this process occurs in an in-between[8] *third space* being neither the country

[8] This in-between space has been characterised as an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always in-transition space lacking clear boundaries, where transformations occur especially to those being in a constant state of displacement, who stay in this space so long that it becomes sort of "home" (Anzaldúa 2002). The notion of precarity, defined as "a social condition from which clear political demands and principles emerge" (Butler 2009: xxv), has been widely used in migration and citizenship studies (i.e. Schierup and Jørgensen 2016). According to Butler (2009: 2-3), precarity, as "a politically induced condition", is differentially distributed, as some lives are considered more valuable than others.

of origin nor the country of migration.[9] This in-between-space, characterised by cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, enables migrants to develop what he calls a *double vision* that brings together experiences of the past and the present and allows them to re-create their selves in a constant process of creativity (Bhabha 1994).[10]

This new space that migrants find themselves navigating in is characterised by extreme complexity concerning the norms which organize social life. These norms, represented by social borders, play a decisive role in creating identities in the context of migration, as they become salient in relation to characteristics like sexual orientation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, age and politics (i.e. Rosaldo 1989; Siara 2014; Solone Boccardi 2015). These borderlands should, however, not be regarded as analytically empty transitional zones but rather as "sites of creative cultural production" (Rosaldo 1989: 208). Given the mobility found in the globalised world, these norms are not homogeneous anymore, if they ever were. Superdiversity –described as a diversification of diversity due to changes in migration patterns worldwide (Vertovec 2007; 2010), resulting in unprecedented forms of social and cultural diversity, especially in large urban centres (Blommaert 2013b)– shapes cities by creating connections between people belonging to different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and creating extremely complex networks of co-existence and co-determination. Following these changes, language can no longer be seen as tied to stable and resident communities (Blommaert 2010: 1). It is, on the contrary, moving across the globe together with its speakers and is subject to changes during this process, while the world has become "a tremendously complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways" (Blommaert 2010: 1). The superdiveristy approach has, however, been criticised for its description of the world as a web of villages, as this image seems to imply an inexistent equality while ignoring cultural and linguistic hierarchies. "In the case of globalisation as a process of

[9] The concept of *third space* has been applied in various fields, such as anthropology, sociology, communication studies, linguistics, human geography and education. According to Darvin and Norton (2014), the *third space* can take up different forms, as for example in language learning classrooms, where migrants' fluid, multidimensional identities can be acknowledged and affirmed by building on migrants' specific characteristics as well as their transnational literacies. During this procedure, native languages, knowledges and cultures can be accommodated and affirmed (Duff 2007; Kim and Duff 2012) resulting in the ideal of the classroom as a generative space for democratic and intercultural citizens who are able to empathize with different people (Sanchez 2007).

[10] The concept of the *third space*, however influential, has been met by scepticism on the part of many scholars, who claim that by stressing hybridity, it overlooks the formative re-structuring properties of liminality and treats it simply as a positive expression of cultural hybridity without taking hierarchy -and its potential for oppression- into consideration (Thomassen 2014). The absence of contextualization alongside a disengagement from global neocolonial power structures, have been used as further points of criticism of the *third space* as far as both its premises and its empirical implications are concerned (Ikas and Wagner 2009). Finally, its "fixation on the logic of the spatial metaphor" has been questioned (Lossau 2009).

empire building, the English language - in all its variant forms as well as the cultural baggage that it carries - constitutes the language of the empire", argues Ndhlovu (2014: 17), while criticising the superdiversity approach for ignoring these power relations. All villages, he continues, are controlled by small hegemonic elites, propagating normative linguistic and cultural values and imposing them on every member of the village (ibid.).[11]

As populations move through space, they find themselves connected to complex, intertwined networks, which are also unstable. In this context, a translocational perspective seems suitable in order to encompass the aforementioned complexity (Anthias 2018). Translocationality seems apt to reflect the complexity of the subjects' lives and social relations, as it sets its focus on narratives of location and positionality, shedding light on the concrete social relations, practices and processes that construct identities and differences in naturalised ways (Brah 1996), while problematising the epistemological and ontological status of identity (Anthias 2002). According to this approach, belonging, as differential positioning in terms of social positions, divisions and identities (Brah 1996), is mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations, and results in the co-occurrence of different spaces in one specific time and place. These connections between past, present and future (Anthias 2006), and the "imaginary possessions" (Probyn 1996: 68) people relate to in the different time frames they move through, influence the experience of migration.

All aforementioned factors influence the everyday lives of the participants of this study. With *migrant woman* being only one of the characteristics of their identities, this study aims at exposing the ways the participants' multi-layered identities are reflected in their narratives, resulting in complex images of the self and the other being projected onto the communicative event of the interview. The analysis of the women's narratives aims at finding examples of identity constructions formed by the women themselves in the narratives they produce, rather than by projecting pre-defined categories on them.

[11] An example of these power relations is found in asylum settings, where "deterritorialized speakers use a mixture of languages when interacting with family, friends, coworkers, and authorities" (Jacquemet 2016). Sociolinguistic studies of asylum procedures have focused on the superdiversity found in these environments, their multilinguistic nature (Blommaert 2009; Spotti 2015) and the hierarchies and power relations involved (Blommaert 2001), related, among other factors, to the often limited linguistic competence of asylum seekers who are expected to interact with bureaucracy. In these superdiverse environments, the blending of language with technological innovations results in what Jacquemet (2016) defines as *transidioma*, the result of communicative practices used by superdiverse populations who alongside traditional forms of communication make use of multimodal digital communication as well.

2.3.1. Citizenship and belonging

In the systems of complexity and polycentricity of the super-diverse world described above, social lives are organised in relation to many competing and/or complementary centres (Blommaert 2010). Therefore, migrants no longer have only to integrate to the dominant culture and prove their integration by their alignment to the concept of citizenship as defined in their new home. On the contrary, they have to integrate into the many niches that compose their actual social environment (Agha 2007), encompassing the societies of the countries where they live as well as their diaspora communities and the gender, age and social class they belong to. These centres expect them to project differential images of themselves, resulting in polymorphous and diverse identities being adopted in different settings. In other words, migrants' actions are orienting towards different orders of indexicality (Blommaert 2013b: 195). In these complex environments, with competing interests and different cultural expectations, some signs which are interpreted as signs of citizenship can, from another perspective, be seen as acts of dis-citizenship (Blommaert 2013b), resulting in complicated images of the self and the other being constructed by migrants who navigate the power relations they find themselves confronted with. Nevertheless, however complicated the image of citizenship may have become, the distinction between citizen[12] and non-citizen, between the political body which Agamben (1995: 177) refers to as "the People" – and "the subset of the people as a fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies", "the class that is de facto if not de jure, excluded from politics", remains central in the experience of migration.

The aforementioned changes and the creation of super-diverse environments have resulted in the transformation of the concept of citizenship. Although being a citizen is still part of the foundation of the modern nation-state, where everybody is meant to belong, while the rest of the world is excluded (Castles 2005), belonging is no longer connected exclusively to origin and people may claim their belonging to different communities through acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen 2008). This approach adds an active, performative component to the relatively stable concept of citizenship while granting the person the possibility to constitute herself as a "subject of rights" (Isin 2009: 371), regardless of the official status the state apparatus grants her, with non-citizen migrant groups being involved in practices and ways of engaging in citizenship even when lacking the formal status of being a citizen (Nyers and Rygiel

[12] It has been argued that, through legalistic and normative definitions, the *citizen* has been scripted as a liberal, white, bourgeois, heterosexual, man, leading to the powerful hierarchisation and securitisation of others (Basham and Vaughan-Williams 2013).

2012: 2). The experiences and practices of mobility connected with migration provide new spaces for acts of (re)conceptualising citizenship, therefore opening up sites of contestation, identification and struggle within a process of global movements of populations.[13] However, it has been argued that the transformative power of most acts of citizenship is mainly traced in individual agency, as nation-state politics continue to determine the actual realisation of concrete rights (i.e. Muller 2004), thereby controlling inclusion and at the same time imposing exclusion of certain populations.

The concept of citizenship is closely related to the notion of belonging and the resulting distinction between "us" and "them", which is central in determining access to privileges as well as entitlement to rights and resources (Anthias 2006).[14] While categorizing and grouping does not "precede and establish identity" (Bucholtz and Hall 2003: 371), but is rather a result of sociopolitical invention, homogenization is achieved through processes of generalization and, specifically, through mitigating the differences within a group while highlighting the differences that characterise out-group members (Bucholtz and Hall 2003: 372). During this process, the out-group, the *other*, representing the other side of the contrast, is essentialised and imagined as homogenous (Gal and Irvine 1995).[15] Among other imagery involved in this process, images of linguistic practices as deriving from those persons' essences, rather than from historical accident (Gal and Irvine 1995), are coupled with stereotypes and racist views[16] presenting out-groups in a negative manner (e.g. van Dijk 2005; Augoustinos and Every 2007; Wodak and Richardson 2013), while differences between majority and minority people are seen

[13] *Selfie citizenship* is a new form of claiming citizenship and belonging through the use of networked self-portraits (Kunstman 2017), with citizens making claims which are distributed and consumed through social media. This form of self-presentation constitutes a new visual, networked and social phenomenon and should be understood as a field of potential violence and contestation (Kuntsman (2017) while being, at the same time, a performance of identity, citizenship and belonging through a dialogical gesture and a polemical representation of political identity (Aziz 2017) .

[14] In austerity Greece, citizenship has been defined as fluid and flexible, easily shaped by public authorities. Konsta and Lazaridis (2010) describe this form of citizenship as *plastic* citizenship, resulting in insecurity, exclusion and abjectification, as boundaries are blurred and processes of becoming are changing over time, influenced by the notion of who is entitled to the right to belong and who is excluded from it.

[15] The same holds for in-group members, who see themselves as belonging to a homogenous group as well, while both seem to be the result of a homogenisation process which enables the identification of in- and out-groups.

[16] Van Dijk perceives racism as "constituted by social practices of discrimination [...] and relationships of power abuse by dominant groups, organizations, and institutions" which all have "a mental basis [...] rooted in racist prejudices and ideologies", i.e. in "socially shared and negatively oriented mental representations of Us about Them" (van Dijk 2008a: 103).

as weaknesses of the latter, thus sustaining and "justifying" their unequal treatment (Archakis 2018: 4-5).

While overt racism is no longer accepted in most countries, colour-blind racism seems to have taken its place. The latter is institutional and appears to be subtle and non-racial, "as it relies on 'othering' in a soft way, implying that minorities are themselves responsible for the difficulties they face" (Bonilla-Silva 2006: 1).[17] Similar to overt racism, more subtle forms create an image of the *other* as inferior to the group one belongs to, as well.[18] "A new form of racism peculiar to all Western nations, exhibits a common macro-racial discourse […] unified by its common historical ideological root, the significant presence of the Other through immigration, and by the impact of global 'Western' culture" (Bonilla-Silva 2000: 194). Regardless of the exact mechanisms it uses, the aforementioned process relies on homogenization of both the group one belongs to and the imagined group of the *other*, and is motivated by those who have access to power. However, individuals do not necessarily have to accept this dominant ideological discourse of homogenization; under certain circumstances, they can (and do) oppose dominant norms and project their own characteristics together with their own cognitive frames and identities (Bucholtz and Hall 2003: 373, 378).

2.3.2. Monolingual ideologies in a multicultural world

As far as language, migration and bilingualism are concerned, already in 1982 it was estimated that half of the world's population was bilingual (Grosjean 1982: vii). According to other estimates, one in every 35 people is an international migrant (Moyer and Martín Rojo 2007: 137), bringing to the new country of residence at least one language spoken in the country of origin. Despite this existing linguistic plurality,[19] in the nation-state of the western world monolingualism still tends to be seen as the (desired) norm. Consequently, official policies aim at integrating migrant populations while the maintenance of the language migrants spoke in

[17] Avoidance of racist terminology, semantic moves to avoid what has been labelled as racist, use of diminutives, projection strategies and rhetorical incoherence are some of the discursive strategies used by colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2000).

[18] However, research has pointed to the use of overt racism and direct racist attacks in online media, therefore challenging the adoption of colour-blind racism as an interpretive framework and providing evidence for the existence of overt forms of verbal discrimination (Ortiz 2000).

[19] The European Union is an example of a site of linguistic plurality, exceeding the nation-states it is made of. Currently, there are over 300 languages of almost 200 nationalities spoken within the boundaries of the EU (Nikula, Saarinen, Pöyhönen and Kangasvieri 2012).

their countries of origin is usually not included in educational programs (García 2015). The concept of a correspondence between a nation and a language –as well as the potential threat seen in migrants in general (Zetter 2007; Rampton and Charalambous 2019) and the problems associated with migration and linguistic diversity in particular (i.e. Blommaert, Leppännen and Spotti 2012; Wodak 2015)– is a result of the wide-spread image of a nation as a homogenous unit, posited as natural and desirable and understood as organic, and as culturally and linguistically homogenous by 19th century nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990). According to Anderson (1983: 52), print capitalism strengthened this idea of the nation-state, by enabling the massive production of texts in national languages, that could be read by everyone, resulting in the creation of imagined communities, whose members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1983: 49).[20]

Since the nation and the nation-state are not necessarily identical, with most nations containing populations that do not identify with the national identity of the state where they live, while at the same time ethnic groups are scattered across vast territories belonging to different states (Barbour 2000: 6), the image of a national group as homogenous and clearly distinguished from other groups does not reflect reality. Moreover, in the globalised world, with mixed urban populations living in all big cities, the attitudes that imply ethnic group and national identity can be seen as anachronistic (ibid.). However, a shared sense of group membership is indeed found in the majority of the citizens of most nation-states (Brubaker 2006), resulting in an attitude that treats the mobility of citizens as a problem, as it is thought to pose challenges to the perceived or imagined linguistic and cultural homogeneity the state relies on for defining its physical boundaries, its identity as well as the rights and obligations of its citizens (Duchêne et al. 2013: 6).

Despite the fact that linguistic homogeneity is extremely rare, nationalist ideology has insisted on the existence of a linguistically homogenous nation (Barbour 2000: 14) and has used language as a national symbol. "Languages are among the most powerful symbols of national identity. Both historically and in the recent past, the feeling of common belonging that sustains nationalism has often been enhanced by a common language, which has, therefore, frequently

[20] According to Anderson (1983: 50), "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings".

been used as a means of identifying the community in question" (Ruzza 2000: 168). The resulting image of a homogenous language, "an idealization of a particular set of linguistic practices, which have emerged historically and have certain social conditions of existence" (Thompson 1991:5), results in the creation and propagation of a nation speaking one national language exclusively. These kinds of monolingual nation-states have been reacting to linguistic plurality by combating its existence (Hymes 1996; Silverstein 1998), treating multilingualism as a potential problem to their maintenance and reproduction, while seeing linguistic plurality[21] as a deviation from the monolingual norm.[22]

These attitudes towards migrants' multilingual profiles can partly be linked to socioeconomic factors, as the usually economically disadvantaged communities of migrant populations possess skills which find only little recognition in the markets of their new countries of residence (Roy 2003). In this context, the concept of linguistic capital, developed by Bourdieu (1986) and concerning the market value of dialects and sociolects, can provide a useful analytical tool. According to this approach, social actors operate within the framework of markets or social fields that determine the value of the economic and cultural assets they possess. Bourdieu's concept of the market value of forms of language, as part of the resources a person possesses, was taken further by de Swaan (2001), who applied it to entire languages, arguing that the market value of a language is linked to the position of its speakers in the global economy. Consequently, the value of languages as national symbols and as resources for social identification and differentiation has become secondary with languages acquiring their value primarily according to their economic significance (Pujolar 2007; Allan and McElhinny 2017). In this context, ideologies play an important role in forming stances about language learning, as languages with high market value are not considered to pose as much of a problem to second

[21] Heller argues that the concept of bi- and multilingualism makes sense only "within the discursive regime of the nation-state, with its homogenization and equation of language, culture, nation, territory and state" (Heller 2007: 340), with language becoming a means to facilitate the construction of boundaries in order to maintain power relations.

[22] This linguistic plurality found in a country concerns not only the languages spoken by migrants who arrived recently but also by parts of the population living in the country for quite some time and speaking languages or forms of a language that differ from the standard norm. In this context, the difference between a language and a dialect is relevant. Labeling a variety as a language and another as a dialect is a political decision, as speakers of related but poorly mutually comprehensible varieties considering that they share an ethnic or national identity, will accept that their varieties constitute dialects of a single language (Barbour 2000: 12), which is not the case when those speaking the aforementioned varieties do not identify with the same national identity. In this case, when the speakers define themselves as belonging to different ethnic groups, they will describe the varieties they speak as different languages rather than dialects of the same language (e.g. Carmichael (2000) on the linguistic ideologies of Croats and Serbs after the disintegration of Yugoslavia; Canakis (2011) on a historical perspective and language issues in Former Yugoslavia; Greenberg (2004) on language as a marker of ethnic identity and Serbo-Croatian.)

language learning and bilingual first language acquisition as languages with smaller market value. The link between language and access to power is obvious, with market value becoming a system reproducing hierarchies without the need to enrol its actors in any explicit, organized classist, racist or sexist agenda (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Language, in other words, gains its value by relating to socioeconomic hierarchies while at the same time reflecting and reproducing them through language ideologies.

2.3.3. Bilingualism, education, and the status of a language

As discussed above, migration is closely related to bi- and multilingualism of large parts of migrant populations, with migrants often learning a foreign language while their children find themselves in bilingual environments, resulting most of the times in bilingual first language acquisition. During the past decades, widespread fears of bilingualism[23] have been expressed (cf. Tsokalidou 2015). Although most of them have been proven to be the result of exaggeration, misunderstanding and/or oversimplification, with various researchers pointing out the positive effects of bilingualism (e.g. Tsiplakou 2007; Yow and Markman 2014; Marzecová et al. 2013), monolingual language acquisition is still considered the normal condition by large parts not only of the population in general but also of people working with language in particular, especially teachers of multilingual migrant students. These attitudes result in the mistaken advice given to parents to abandon the home language or give extra tuition in the language of the environment (Cummins 1984). Similar results were found in a study conducted by Tsokalidou (2005) focusing on attitudes towards bilingualism in Greek primary schools, with the teachers stating that they advise migrant parents to speak to their children in Greek as much as possible. The advice to avoid the use of L1 at home in order to strengthen L2 is directly opposite to the documented necessity to build on the L1 of a child in order to support his/her linguistic and cognitive development (Cummins 2000). In a study conducted by Mattheoudakis,

[23] Fears regarding bilingualism have been expressed from different perspectives and have focused on different areas of human life. Baetens Beardsmore (2003) suggests the following categories: parental, cultural, educational and politico-ideological fears. Parental fears are usually found when the parents come from unilingual backgrounds and transfer their own difficulties in coping with the new language to their children. As far as cultural fears are concerned, bilingualism is sometimes seen as a form of cultural aggression. The fear of language loss among immigrant groups due to the dominance of the language of the host country falls into this category. Educational fears concern mostly the children of immigrants and the question of whether they will be able to cope with the educational system in the host country. Hakuta has argued that these educational fears have less to do with actual education and more with national unity (Hakuta 1986: 224). Finally, socio-political fears are found in as much as bilingualism is seen as a threat to the monolingual nation-state, based on the assumption that monolingualism in the national language is the natural result of being born and growing up in a country (Gogolin 2006).

Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi (2017), after examining teachers' beliefs towards bilingualism, the researchers came to the conclusion that there is a strong need for continuing professional development in order to enhance teachers' awareness on bilingualism-related topics, as the children's exposure to multiple languages is often seen as some kind of deviation from normality, a problem which needs to be attended to, a difficulty posed to members of certain families who do not conform to the norm.

Instead of seeing bilingualism and linguistic variation as an obstacle to language learning, the translanguaging approach[24] goes beyond the concept of two, distinct languages and focuses on the "communicative collaboration […] on a personal and a collective level" (Tsokalidou and Skourtou 2020: 221), as multilingual speakers use all the linguistic and cultural tools at their disposal in order to communicate, position themselves and handle their relations with other members of their communities (Tsokalidou 2017). In this context, language is seen as a series of performances within social and cultural contexts (Tsiplakou 2016), as speakers use elements of various repertoires and construct a variety of meanings while claiming different identities. It is, in other words, a strategy used by multilingual speakers who employ the linguistic resources they possess in their everyday interactions in order to understand, shape experience and make sense of the worlds they inhabit (García 2009).

In contrast to most European countries, multilingualism is the norm in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the population of most countries being fluent in a European and an African language or in an African lingua franca and an African mother tongue.[25] Therefore, the notion of bilingualism as a threat to national identity is not found in most Sub-Saharan African countries. As already mentioned, the image is different in the monolingual countries of the western world. However, while prejudice against bilinguals and bilingual language acquisition has not ceased to dominate in big parts of the population of these monolingual countries, bilingualism continues to spread, especially due to migration. In this context, paying close attention to the differences between elite bilingualism and bilingual language learning in

[24] The term "translanguaging" was first used by Cen Williams and refers to the educational concept which supports the systematic use of two languages within the same lesson (Baker 2011) and sets as is goal the reinforcement of the students' ability in both languages (Williams 2002). By using dual language processing, the students augment the content of the message and are therefore capable to understand it from their own perspective (Tsokalidou and Skourtou 2020: 222). At the same time, their confidence and self-esteem are increased, as they feel proud of their cultural and linguistic background (Tsokalidou and Skourtou 2020: 220).

[25] In Kenya, for example, two-thirds of the population are bilingual in Swahili and a mother tongue (Githiora 2008: 239). Moreover, countries like South Africa and Cameroon have adopted official multilingual language policies.

migrant communities can bring fruitful insights to the discussion on bilingualism[26] on the whole. In the case of elite bilingualism, the acquisition of a second language is considered "a conscious option of parents from stable, middle-class backgrounds who are in a position to support the educative process with back-up involvement" (Baetens Beardsmore 2003: 17). In this context, the cultural pressures associated with bilingualism in migrant populations seem to be absent, as for example in the case of migrant Greek children attending schools in Luxembourg and being exposed to the multilingual profile of the country (Gogonas and Kirsch 2016). In their study, Gogonas and Kirsch (2016) came to the conclusion that Luxembourg's languages are seen as an asset, possessing a high value and enhancing job opportunities, resulting in the parents not judging their children's exposure to the country's multilingualism as a burden. The image is different concerning migrant bilingualism and the related language attitudes and ideologies. These differences can be attributed to the status of the languages acquired and the social class of the speakers. According to Edwards (2003: 35), "elite bilingualism involves the acquisition of prestigious languages by members of the educated classes whose formal instruction would, historically, have been seen as incomplete without the acquisition of another language or two". This is not the case with bilingualism in migrant communities, where the acquisition of a language different from the dominant one is considered a burden for the learner. The aforementioned differences are linked to the concept of linguistic capital, which attributes each language a value according to its position in the global market, as "all speech is produced for and through the market to which it owes its existence and its most specific properties" (Bourdieu 1992: 76). Attitudes towards bilingualism are, in other words, rooted in political economy, in relationships of hierarchy and inequality, dominance and subordination (Garrett 2007).

These notions regarding the status of a language and its subsequent value are in constant

[26] It is important to differentiate between bilingualism and diglossia, with the latter being "a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standard), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superimposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of literature either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation" (Ferguson 1972a: 244-245).The two varieties are, in other words, used for different social functions. According to this model, languages in a bilingual community are in complementary distribution with little or no overlap (Gogonas 2010). This was the case in Greece, with *katharevousa* being the written variety and *dimotiki* the spoken language. This notion of diglossia differs from its definition by Fishman (1967), according to which diglossia refers to all kinds of language varieties used by a speech community, extending diglossia to situations where genetically unrelated languages are used by the same population. According to Fishman, diglossia describes a number of sociolinguistic situations, from stylistic differences within one language or the use of separate dialects to the use of (related or unrelated) separate languages.

dialogue with family language policies, consisting of overt and explicit as well as covert and implicit decisions concerning language use and literacy practices within the home domain and among family members (Schiffman 1996; Shohamy 2006; Curdt-Christiansen 2013). Family language policy constitutes a link between everyday family life and life as a citizen, as it relates intimacy and communication between family members within the private sphere with the public sphere of social life and orientations towards success, therefore reflecting the perceived requirements of the state, the labor market, and ultimately the world (Blommaert 2018). Internal pressures, like for example ideology and/or beliefs of family members as well as external domains, like the school the children attend, have been found to influence family language policies (Spolsky 2011), which are then formed and implemented in interaction with wider political, social, and economic forces (Lanza and Li 2016). During this procedure, parents' theories of what needs to be done to teach children to speak a given language and parents' socializing practices are intimately related to their ideology of what is valuable and for what purpose (Duranti 1997: 199).[27] Consequently, migrants might be motivated to opt for bilingual child-raising for various reasons or avoid speaking their native language to their children due to its lacking prestige in the context of migration.

2.3.4. Second language acquisition and migration

Migration can, without any doubt, be described as a life-changing event, as migrants find themselves in a novel environment, defined by different social norms and confronted with new ways of communication, often including a new language. As a social practice, language learning is not a simple procedure of acquiring linguistic competence. It is, on the contrary, a complicated process, implicated in relations of power (Darvin and Norton 2014), whose goal is the creation of a communicatively competent speaker (Hymes 1972), who will be able to do things with the new language (Duranti 1997). If an act of speaking is described as an act of participation (Duranti 1997), migrant second language learning aims at creating speakers who will be able to participate in the larger social activities taking place in the country of migration.

[27] Family language policy has been associated with generalised images of parenthood, as for example in the case of Brazilian migrant mothers who have been found to associate their success in passing their language on to their children with their sense of motherhood (Souza 2015).

A large body of research has focused on second language acquisition[28] by adult migrant populations, analysing the factors influencing the differential success in language learning as well as the interaction between these factors and the acquisition of the first language (L1) of the parents by their children. For decades, the so-called integrative motivation has been considered a key factor (Gardner and Lambert 1972). According to this model, social identification with the new country plays a crucial role in successful language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972: 135) argue that "the L2 learner must be willing to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group and take on very subtle aspects of their behaviour". However, this model has been criticised for its oversimplifications. According to Blommaert (2013), the nature of modern society, with its multiple norms, calls for a pluralistic and nuanced approach, which will take into consideration the variety of social environments the migrants act in and the plurality of resources they should have access to in order to cover various aspects of social life. Motivation to integrate can, therefore, no longer be seen as the sole, predefining factor of successful second language learning. The integrative model has also been criticised for its simplistic approach to motivation and identity. According to its critics, these concepts should not be seen as attributes of a person but rather as social constructs (Norton 2000: 4), with the idea of clearly formed groups, with in-groups and out-groups, being unrealistic (Pavlenko 2002: 279). The reexamination of the concept of identity has led to the formulation of more dynamic models of language learning, conceiving of language as one of the resources migrants draw upon in their everyday lives (Blommaert 2013b).

Instead of the much criticised integrative motivation, investment has been proposed as a more suitable analytic tool to approach second language learning by migrant populations. The concept of investment, which can be understood as a primarily sociological construct, signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it (Norton and Yihong 2008: 110). According to this approach, if learners invest in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital (Norton 2000). The influence of Bourdieu's notion of linguistic capital is evident. The notion of investment aims at seeing learners as people with various

[28] Concerning the terminology used, some researchers support the use of the term socialization instead of acquisition, suggesting that "the substitution of socialization for acquisition places language learning within the more comprehensive domain of socialization, the lifelong process through which individuals are initiated into cultural meanings and learn to perform the skills, tasks, roles and identities expected by whatever society or societies they may live in" (Watson-Gegeo 1988: 582).

desires and complicated pasts, who are constantly creating and recreating a perception of themselves and the ways they connect to the world. Investment, in this context, refers to their future projections and desires, while at the same time making visible the relations of power that enable or constrain language learning (Kramsch 2013).[29] Norton and Toohey use the concepts of imagined communities and identities in relation to the investment to learn a language, as a projection into the future, when "learners imagine who they might be and who their communities might be, when they learn the language" (Norton and Toohey 2011: 422).[30] Darvin and Norton's (2016) expanded model of investment responds to the changes found in the communicative landscape of the globalised world, driven by advancements in technology, and locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital and ideology, demonstrating how the positioning of learners, their negotiation of learning stances, and systemic patterns of control affecting their agency shape their investment to learn a foreign language.

Finally, the concept of selective acculturation has been proposed to account for the differential results in second language learning among migrant populations. This model has been described as the most "favorable adaptation trajectory for immigrant families" (Medvedeva 2012: 518), who are acquiring certain cultural practices from the dominant culture, while maintaining elements of their own ethnic culture (Gibson 1988). According to Portes and Hao (2002), selective acculturation is frequently associated with fluent bilingualism among immigrant children, which has been found to play a role in the maintenance of a positive parent-child relationship. In this context, the beliefs of the parents concerning language acquisition in general and bilingualism in particular have been found to affect child bilingual language acquisition and child language use. Different models have been proposed, distinguishing four types of parental language and cultural orientations: L1-centric, bicultural, multicultural and L2-centric (Kemppainen et al. 2004). Family language policy is, then, formed according to the aforementioned orientations, with impact belief playing a crucial role.[31]

[29] Despite the criticism of integrative motivation as an explanatory factor for second language learning in migrant populations, this framework is not necessarily incompatible with investment. The two notions can be combined resulting in a more complex approach of differential success in learning a language.

[30] The concept of imagined communities relates to the image of possible selves, "the individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming […] the representation of the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess" (Dörneyi and Ushioda 2009: 3).

[31] According to de Houwer, a strong family language policy, with home rules about language use, is the result of a strong impact belief, according to which the parents are convinced that they directly control the linguistic functioning of their children (1999: 83). According to a weak impact belief, language acquisition is influenced mainly by the wider environment, making parental decisions less important in shaping language use. Parental

2.3.5. Language competence and language testing

As already mentioned, the ideological correspondence between a nation and a language is found in most countries of the so-called western world, resulting in the seemingly causal connection between language competence and right to citizenship. This connection is reflected in the fact that successful completion of language tests is one of the formal prerequisites migrants must fulfil in order to apply for citizenship.[32] The connection between language testing, linguistic competence and entitlement to citizenship has been criticised, as it has been argued that the increasing importance of language testing in the context of migration and so-called "integration policies" represents a form of modernist linguistic border control "in which 'modern' (and thus essentialist) regimes of identity attribution are central, and in which a static, mono-normative and artefactualized concept of language is used" (Blommaert, Leppänen and Spotti 2012: 2).[33] During this procedure of language testing, competence is assessed based on the Common European Framework of Reference on Language (CEFR), a guideline produced by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division for the description of foreign language achievement levels, which has provided not only a common reference for European users, but has also influenced current thinking about language learning and teaching in non-European countries as well (Pizziconi 2015). According to the CEFR's goals, it aims at linking language learning, language teaching, and language assessment to a more real-life oriented approach while providing a common currency, in terms of terminology as well as levels of attainment (Figueiras 2012). At the same time, it sets facilitating and promoting plurilingualism and pluriculturalism as one of its pivotal goals. However, the CEFR has been criticised for its ideological foundations (i.e. Van Avermaet 2009), as well as for promoting a standardised image of language that does

attitudes have been found to play a crucial factor in this context, as they affect the speed and quality of language acquisition (Li 1999).

[32] However, there are big differences concerning the language competence required in order to have access to citizenship, as some countries define knowledge at A2-level as sufficient while others (i.e. Denmark) ask for B2 proficiency. The levels of proficiency required tend to be highest in countries where the immigration debate has been the most intense (McNamara and Shohamy 2008: 92).

[33] Foucault (1979) argues that tests are used for exercising power and control. "The examination combines the technique of an observing hierarchy and those of normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to quantify, classify and punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of disciplines, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected" (Foucault 1979: 184). While criticising language testing practices, Shohamy (2011) argues that they do not leave room for multilingual functioning. These approaches are rooted in nation-state ideologies, she argues.

not reflect real-life linguistic competence, by creating an image of homogeneity, while not providing space for individual variation and alternative learning processes (i.e. North 2004).

Similar to most states, Greece has introduced a connection between formal linguistic competence and right to apply for citizenship by coupling successful completion of a Greek language test to migrants' right for naturalisation. As defined in the Greek Citizenship Code, those applying for citizenship should be "smoothly integrated into the economic and social life of the country" and have adequate knowledge of the Greek language so that they "can fulfil the obligations arising from the status of the Greek citizen" in order to "be able to participate actively and effectively in the political life of the country" (53 Greek Citizenship Code, Article 5A 'Substantive Conditions of Naturalisation'). The aforementioned definition remains relatively vague and open to interpretation as far as the exact nature of the obligations stemming from citizenship are concerned as well as the description of an active and effective participation in the political life of the country. Nevertheless, concerning language competence, it is clearly stated that this has to be proven by successful completion of a standardised test, where applicants have to possess passive knowledge of the language (reading and listening) on B1 level accompanied by their competence to produce written texts on A1 level.[34] After completion of the test, applicants have to prove knowledge of Greek history, culture, geography and society by answering relevant questions in a similar testing procedure. This connection between language and citizenship reflects the image of Greece as a linguistically homogenous state where every citizen is capable of speaking and understanding the Greek language in its oral as well as its written form.

2.4. Language(s) and the modern Greek state

The Greek nation-state has long set the cultivation of a national consciousness as one of its main goals, using the educational system as a means to create an image of the national *self* as radically different from others, while focusing on the continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to the present (Avdela 2000). In the national narrative (re)produced in school in order to strengthen this consciousness, the Greek nation is described as a natural, unified, eternal and unchanging

[34] Those applying for citizenship must possess a certificate issued by IDEKE (the Ministry of Education's Institute for Lifelong Education and Adult Education Program) certifying that the applicant has sufficient knowledge of Greek obtained by taking 100 hours of Greek language classes and passing a test. Otherwise, foreigners can apply for Greek citizenship provided that they have completed at least three years of secondary school education in Greece or that they possess a certificate/diploma issued by a Greek high school.

entity (Avdela 2000), not being a product of history but rather the result of a strong Greek soul, resisting historical change. An analysis of the curriculum taught at Greek schools reveals an emphasis on national topics, particularly in history where two-thirds of the content deals with Greece, mentioning the EU only shortly and ignoring other countries (Faas 2011: 171-172). An emphasis on homogeneity coupled with a feeling of superiority, and the marginalisation of those who are different, has long influenced Greek state policy and social attitudes (Karakatsanis and Swarts 2003). Religion has played a crucial role in this context, with the Orthodox Church having identified itself with the Greek nation-state and having, therefore, played an active role in forging and sustaining an ethnically based Greek identity (Clogg 2002). The resulting Helleno-Christian identity is an amalgam of classical memories and Byzantine traditions (Tziovas 2001).

Language holds an important position in establishing the aforementioned image of a homogenous nation. Greek, the national and official language of Greece, it spoken by a population of approximately 11 million people inside Greece and by Greeks in the diaspora (estimated to consist of 10 million people who have different levels of language competence and literacy), for whom Greek might be their first or second language (Dendrinos and Theodoropoulou 2007). Building on time-honoured practice and beliefs, over the past decades linguistic mythologies have reinforced the ideal image of Greek monolingualism inside the borders of the Greek state (Christidis 1999), while the Greek language has been celebrated for its unique diachrony[35] and has been related to a homogenous nation of Greeks, ignoring the existence of linguistic minorities and their language practices.

Despite their relative absence from the public sphere, populations speaking a language different than the official Greek language do exist in Greece. The old minority languages found

[35] According to Frangoudaki (1992), these positions are formulated in nationalist terms and construe an idealized image of Greek, celebrating it for its diachrony – a feature said to be exclusive to the Greek language alone. However, myths about the superiority of one's language are not a unique feature of the Greek national narrative. Many cultures around the world define their linguistic identity based on the superiority of their language (Bauer and Trudgill 1998), resulting in language myths similar to those expressed about the uniqueness of Greek, like for example myths concerning Arabic (Ferguson 1972a), myths concerning Japanese (Miller 1982) and attitudes on the linguistic superiority of French (Balibar (1985). While claiming the superiority of the Greek language, the proponents of this argument often suggest that the purity of the language has to be preserved; in this context, linguistic borrowing, a common mechanism found in all languages, has been described as a sign of linguistic degeneration (Dendrinos and Theodoropoulou 2007), with some academics going as far as to claim that Greek has the particularity of not needing to borrow words from any other language (i.e. Babiniotis 1984). While Greek has been celebrated for its uniqueness, intellectuals have, at the same time, claimed that the Greek language is under constant decline, losing its uniqueness and purity. As this language-decline myth became a common theme in the media as well as a subject of academic conferences and public debates, a proposal to 'save the national language' was brought to Parliament in November 1985 (Dendrinos and Theodoropoulou 2007).

in the country are Turkish, Pomak, Romany, Ladino, Armenian, Vlachika, Arvanitika and Slavika/Slavomakedonika (Trudgill 2001). Compared to the other minority languages, Turkish is the strongest and speakers of Turkish in Thrace are a protected minority under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne. It is important to note that the majority of the speakers of these minority languages have Greek as their native language (Trudgill 2001). Their ethnolinguistic vitality is therefore rather low, as it is dependent on the demographic, economic, political and cultural capital of the ethnolinguistic group using these languages (Prujiner et al. 1984), with only Turkish having a strong ethnolinguistic vitality and Ladino and Arvanitika being all but extinct today (Tsitsipis 1998). Accurate information on languages other than Greek spoken in Greece is hard to obtain, as no census since 1951 has included a question about languages while academic research has been partly distorted by anti-minority Greek nationalism[36] (Trudgill 2000: 250). Nevertheless, the existence of all aforementioned languages stands as proof of the fact that Greece has been a multilingual country long before the arrival of large numbers of migrant populations.

During the last two decades, migration has influenced the linguistic profile of Greece, while a large number of immigrant children started attending Greek schools. These children did not speak the language and were possessing cultural practices which differed from the mainstream Greek norm. Therefore, the educational system found itself facing multiple challenges, not being prepared to adapt to the needs of these populations. As schooling and education in Greece are accessed through the Greek language,[37] the education of migrant children and their attendance in Greek schools presupposed necessary adaptations in the curricula paired with the acquisition of linguistic competence on the part of the migrants. This need was mostly met by reception classes, which were focusing on "intensive learning of the Greek language" (Zeis and Liapi 2006), settings as their goal the provision of migrant children

[36] For example, Angelopoulos (1979) claims that "Greece represents, in Europe, a country with practically ideal ethnic, linguistic and religious homogeneity and unity" (in Trudgill 2000: 251). As Karakasidou (1993: 250) points out, with reference to the work of Greek academics on the subject of the slavophone minority, "[t]he extremist and militant tone of most articles is alarming. It is striking that much of the rhetoric coming out of Greece has progressed markedly little beyond the simplistic and reductionist notions that inflamed the Balkan Crisis at the turn of the century".

[37] International schools are an exception to this rule, as they do not follow the Greek national curriculum and knowledge is accessed in languages other than Greek. Moreover, courses at university departments of foreign language and literature are commonly taught in the language which is their object of study. Finally, in recent years, some postgraduate programmes are offered in English (Dendrinos and Theodoropoulou 2007), while private institutions have started offering graduate and postgraduate courses in foreign languages.

with the linguistic prerequisites which would allow them their subsequent integration in regular schools.

Academics working in the fields of language and/or education have formulated different suggestions concerning the ways to provide migrant children with the means necessary for them to be successfully included in the country's educational system (i.e. Tsokalidou 2005). These discussions have led to fruitful criticism of existing programs, attitudes and terms[38] (i.e. Palaiologou and Faas 2012; Chatzidaki 2005; Skourtou 2002) and have resulted in the formulation of various, alternative methods and approaches (i.e. Dendrinou 2010) with a special focus on the need to implement intercultural education programs (i.e. Palaiologou 2004; Simou 2013) while focusing on language and multiculturalism (i.e. Kiliari 2005).[39] At the same time, the increasing number of the adult migrant population created the need for trained professional instructors of Greek as a foreign language, resulting in the introduction of relevant postgraduate courses in order to develop expertise in the field (i.e. the postgraduate programme *Language education for refugees and migrants* at the Hellenic Open University and *Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language* programme at the University of Athens). As far as adult language learning is concerned, the Greek state provides language courses to adult immigrants living in Greece, together with NGOs and other organisations working in the field. However, these courses are not always accessible and enrolment rates are low, as migrants' living and working conditions often hinder them from attending regularly (Mattheoudakis 2005).

2.5. Gender, language, and migration

As this study focuses on narratives produced by migrant women, a brief overview of the literature on language and gender with a subsequent focus on its relation to the context of migration seems necessary. Over the last decades, researchers working in various fields of linguistics have paid close attention to the role of gender in relation to language. In her

[38] Tsokalidou (2005), for example, criticizes the wide-spread use of the term 'alloglossa pedia' ('other language-speaking children') as being both unsuitable and limiting for children coming from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with varying degrees of language competence, all of whom are actively, passively or potentially bilingual. She claims that the most suitable term to describe their linguistic behaviour is "bilingual children". This change in terminology has both an ideological and an educational dimension, as it suggests a positive and empowering attitude, not focusing on difference but on combined knowledge.

[39] The project to reform language teaching in the Turkish speaking Muslim minority in Thrace (www.museduc.gr) resulted in a multi-facetted approach, with interventions in the area as well as the creation of new curricula and textbooks for the children alongside training material for educators, providing a positive example on how to conceive of bilingualism in the educational context.

influential *Language and Woman's Place*, Robin Lakoff (1975) was the first to establish a connection between language and gender while describing women's language as differing from the language used by male speakers. According to Lakoff, the characteristics of female linguistic practices do not grant women access to male domains, therefore resulting in female disempowerment. Despite the shortcomings of Lakoff's early work and the criticism it received (i.e. Dubois and Crouch (1975), Holmes (1993b), and Cameron et al. (1988) on her claims concerning tag questions, Holmes (1986) on hedges), it paved the way for continuous and systematic engagement with language and gender in sociolinguistics (i.e. Eckert (1989) on gender differences in variation, Ochs (1992) on gender and indexicality, Bucholtz (1999) on language and white masculinity, Gaudio (1994) on speech properties and homosexuality, Pavlidou, Kapellidi and Karafoti (2015) on linguistic sexism in Greek, Pavlidou and Alvanoudi (2013) on gender and cognition, Palvidou (2006) and Makri-Tsilipakou (2010) on gender and language in the Greek context, Canakis (2015, 2018a) on gender and sexuality).

The association of linguistic practices with gender resulted in the notion of gender deixis, which was introduced by McConnell-Ginet (1988: 80) to refer to the phenomenon by which "the particular form of some linguistic unit expresses or means something about gendered properties of the circumstances of language production" and has been used by scholars from different disciplines to account for their empirical findings. Following this line of thought, certain linguistic expressions have come to be associated with either female or male speakers because of the types of activities during which they are used or because of a particular attitude or affective stance associated with one gender over another (Duranti 1997: 208). However, according to Ochs (1992: 340), this relation between language and gender is non-exclusive, with the same expressions and strategies associated with gender identity being at the same time associated with other social features such as stance or social relations (see also Canakis 2018a).[40]

In the last decades, an extensive body of research has focused on language and gender

[40] Another influential and pioneering study concerning the relation between gender and language was conducted by Susan Gal (1978), who studied language shift and gender in a German-Hungarian speaking community. According to Gal's findings, gender is connected to language shift, with women being more likely to shift to German compared to their husbands. Gal attributes her findings to the factors of belonging, power and social class, with the shift to German representing the modern choice and the willingness of the women to change from peasant to worker status, a general stance of this group in favour of the wider industrial world in which German is spoken. Men, on the contrary, were found to adhere more to traditional values, reflected in respective language use. Consequently, it can be argued that migration, as a major event, followed by life in a new environment, could be a way for women to claim new roles and, consequently, new status, followed by and reflected in certain language choices.

from various perspectives (e.g. Ochs (1992) on the indexicality of gender and the realization of gender hierarchies through language; Tannen (1994) on the problems of communication between heterosexual partners because of differences in linguistic socialization and use; Holmes (1993) on the differences in language use by male and female speakers in New Zealand, coming to different conclusions from those of Lakoff regarding female disempowerment; Coates (1996) on female language use in groups of friends; Holmes (2006) and Cameron (2000) on gender and language use in the work environment; Baxter (2010) on language use by women in leadership positions; Bamman, Eisenstein and Schoebelen (2014) on language and gender identity in social media).

A relatively new field of research, multiracial feminist theory, which stands in dialogue with this study, focuses on the intersection of race and ethnicity with gender, and aims at understanding language use by women of colour, without comparing them to monolingual white standards (e.g. Jacobs-Huey (2006) on African-American women; Ahlers (2012) on native American women; Mendoza-Denton (2008) on Latinas).[41] Moreover, a shift in perspective has taken place in the last years, with scholars from the 'global south' starting to participate in the academic dialogue (e.g. Atanga, Ellece, Littoseliti and Sunderland (2013) on gender and language in Sub-Saharan Africa; Appalraju and de Kadt (2002) on gender and language choice in Zulu-speaking youths; Atanga (2006) on gender and literacies in the Cameroonian Parliament; Ellece (2011) on gender construction in the marriage advice ceremony in Botswana; Obeng and Stoeltje (2002) on women's voices in Akan juridical discourse), while claiming a voice in relevant academic discourses.[42]

According to the theoretical framework adopted by this study, gender is not a stable characteristic of the person, performed in similar ways regardless of the context of interaction. It is, on the contrary, part of a person's identities, constructed in variable, dynamic and context-situated ways (Norton and Pavlenko 2004; Cameron 2005) and influenced by social factors and life-changing events, like for example migration. Nevertheless, for decades, gender has been largely ignored as an explanatory factor by those working in the field of migration, while other

[41] Other researchers in the field have treated whiteness as a factor influencing power, gender and language, e.g. Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) on blackness, whiteness and linguistic minstrelsy in Hollywood film; Kiesling (2008) on doing whiteness in groups of white men.

[42] Lem Lilian Atanga (2006) starts one of her articles on language in Cameroon with the sentence: "I am writing this paper as a literate African woman studying in England." Self-identifying by way of an introductory comment on her academic work, she sets a perspective on the discourse and claims a voice –and visibility– for herself and the group she stands for, namely other female African academics.

variables – such as education, status, politics and economy – were treated as important features influencing models of transnational population movements. However, the picture has changed in the past decades and the incorporation of gender into theories of migration has yielded interesting results. Consequently, various researchers have focused on gender coming to the conclusion that it is an organizing principle that influences migration (e.g. Boyd and Grieco 2003), resulting in "gendered geographies of power" (Mahler and Pessar 2001) and the creation of new masculinities and femininities related to migration, mobility and transnationalism (e.g. Gallo and Scrinzi (2016) on migration, gender and the division of reproductive labour).

As female migrants make up approximately half of the total number of migrants worldwide, the incorporation of gender into language and migration studies is of paramount importance. Interestingly, in the past decades, the number of women who migrate has been growing steadily and the same holds for the percentage of female migrants in relation to the number of international migrants on the whole, resulting in female migrants constituting 47.9% of the global international migrant population in 2019 (UN DESA 2019).[43] Moreover, the percentage of female migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a steady growth over the last decades. According to Zlotnik (2003), while female migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa constituted 40.6% of the total number of migrants from this region in 1960, this percentage rose to 42.1% in 1970, 43.8% in 1980, 46.0% in 1990, and 47.2% in 2000. The work areas women migrate into usually comprise domains like domestic and care work, entertainment and prostitution, as well as sectors in agriculture and catering services (Lutz 2010: 1652). The increased employment of migrant women as care/domestic workers in private homes in Europe in the past decades has been proposed as an explanatory factor for the growing number of women who decide to migrate. This development can be attributed to the increased employment of women in the labour market in European countries, which has, consequently, created the need to outsource domestic work. This need is, partly, met by female migrants performing tasks which "used to be part of the First World women's domestic role" (Zimmerman, Litt and Bose 2006: 10) and has therefore resulted in a growing number of transnational movements in the communities of the so-called sending countries (Williams 2008).[44] Despite the fact that large

[43] Concerning the exact numbers, the share of female migrants has declined from 49.1% in 2000 to 47.9% in 2019, whereas the proportion of male migrants grew from 50.7%in 2000 to 52.1%in 2019. There were more male international migrant workers (83.7 million or 55.7%) than female (66.6 million or 44.3%) in 2013 (ILO 2015).

[44] According to Andall (2000), middle-class women have entered the 'post-feminist paradigm', as they are reconciling family and work by outsourcing parts of their care work tasks to migrants, therefore coping, to a certain extent, with the pressures resulting from their own gender performance.

numbers of women have migrated to perform these kinds of tasks, Steedman (2009) argues that female domestic servants have been almost entirely ignored, reflecting the more general contrast found in the value attached to waged work, traditionally a male domain, and care/domestic work, one of the main fields of female occupation.[45] Based on the observation that, in the domains where the majority of the workers are female, low wages, low status and low occupational mobility are found, Wetterer (2002) describes them as 'feminised domains'.

Moreover and alongside the changes in absolute numbers, patterns of migration have changed in the last decades as well, with an increase in the number of women migrating independently for work, education and as heads of households, resulting in the renegotiation of gender roles and power relations within migrant families.[46] According to Sassen (2000: 503), in the context of migration "households and whole communities are increasingly dependent on women for their survival. Governments too are dependent on their earnings as well as enterprises where profit-making exists at the margins of the 'licit' economy". The fact that traditional gender roles, which might seem to be relatively stable in the country of origin, are often questioned in the context of migration can result in a shift in responsibilities and hierarchies and in the formation of different gender roles in the new environments (cf. Dannecker (2005) on migration and the transformation of gender relations among Bangladeshi labour migrants; Johnson Osirim (2011) on migration and transformation of African-American women in the United States). Among other factors influencing the position of migrants in their new country, language has been found to play a crucial role. Following this line of thought, researchers have explored how learning the language of their new country can offer female migrants the potential to envision new gendered identities. In her study about second language learning and use in migrant populations, Pavlenko (2001) connects this process to the transformation of gender performance and the reconsideration of gender ideologies. Previously unquestioned gender ideologies might be questioned through second language socialization, giving migrant women the opportunity to position themselves differently concerning power

[45] Analysis of Labor Force Survey (LFS) and OECD data concerning the impact of the economic crisis of the last few years on migrant labour shows that women employed in the care-domestic sector have been affected significantly less than men employed in manufacture and constructions (Farris 2015), making this sector relatively stable compared to other, high-risk employment sectors of migrant populations. The increasing demand for care-work in the ageing population of Europe, the commodification of care, the state management of migration and the affectivity and spatial fixity of care-domestic labour might explain this relative stability of work in the care-domain (Farris 2015). These findings are reflected in the occupation of this study's subjects, as the majority of the women work in the informal sector.

[46] Interestingly, the labour force participation rate of migrant women is much higher compared to that of non-migrant women (63.5% and 48.1% respectively) (ILO 2015).

relations and hierarchies inside their families, resulting in an overall change of social roles in the context of migration.

All aforementioned factors apply to the participants of this study as well. Gender hierarchies, migration and the renegotiation of the participants' position in their new country of residence will, therefore, be taken into consideration in the analysis of the data, as they strongly influence the women's identity and the narratives produced during the interviews.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introductory definitions

In the past decades, several definitions of *the migrant* have been proposed. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) a migrant is "a person undergoing a (semi-)permanent change of residence which involves a change of his/her social, economic and/or cultural environment" (Meyer, Witkamp and Pécoud 2008: 13).[47] The International Organisation for Migration defines migrant as "an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common, lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (IOM 2019: 130). According to the IMO (2019) the cause for their movement or whether leaving was voluntary or not, as well as the person's legal status and length of the stay, do not affect the definition of the migrant (IOM 2019). The UNHCR (1951: 14) defines a refugee or asylum seeker as someone, who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

According to the aforementioned definitions, large populations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are residing in Greece.[48] At this point it seems necessary to offer a brief overview of migration to Greece since the 1990s, taking into consideration different legislations resulting in changing migrant statuses, as well as the opportunities and restrictions connected with political decisions, all of which strongly affect the participants of this study. After some

[47] Depending on the motive for their migration and their legal status in their new country of residence, migrants can be classified into temporary labour migrants, highly skilled and business migrants, family reunification migrants and returnees (Meyer, Witkamp and Pécoud 2008).

[48] I will not get into the discussion concerning the distinction between migrants and refugees, or the politics behind the use of one term over the other, as it goes beyond the scope of this study. However, it must be noted that the two terms are often used not only to describe the situation migrants and refugees find themselves in, but also to express political stances concerning the securitisation of migration (Tsoukala 2011; Papadopoulos 2017), as well as racist attitudes often associated with use of the term migrant (Malone 2015).

introductory data on the populations who have migrated to Greece since the 1990s, the different laws and the resulting possibilities concerning the possession of legal status in the country are presented. The profile of the participants, as part of a worldwide network called the African diaspora, is described, giving an account of their everyday lives and the power relations they find themselves navigating. All aforementioned factors have influenced the theoretical framework of this work as well as the methodological tools used, therefore an analysis of the interrelation between the population researched and the methodology adopted is included. In the last section, I address issues arising from the specific characteristics of the research encounter with the participants in this study.

3.2. The immigration landscape in Greece

Since the 1990s, due to its geographical position, Greece has become a major gateway for migrants and asylum seekers. A simplified account of Greece's transition from a sending to a receiving country would neglect a complex history of population exchange, migration and emigration. But it can be said that Greece has emerged as a combination of host, sending and transit country[49] to a larger, more diverse population of migrants than ever before (Zaphiriou-Zarifi 2017). The first major migration to Greece began in 1989, with large numbers of migrants from Albania arriving throughout the 1990s. Small Asian and African populations have been in Greece since the 1980s; however, increasing numbers of arrivals from the Middle-East, South Asia and Africa took place in this century, as a result of economic inequalities, climate change, and political conflicts (Cavounidis 2013; CLANDESTINO 2009), resulting in the majority of migrants and asylum seekers arriving in Greece coming from Asia (58%) and Africa (21%) (Papadopoulos 2012). According to national census data, a significant increase of the registered migrant population has taken place between 1991, when non-nationals constituted less than 2% of the population of Greece, and 2011, when non-nationals constituted 8% of the population. This rate of increase is the largest found in any EU country during this period (SEE 2012).

[49] The terms 'transit country' and 'transit migrant' have been criticised, as they have emerged as terms fulfilling the specific political function of suspending unwanted irregular migrants in space (Oelgemöller 2011). Moreover, the term 'transit' presupposes a linear definition of migration, ignoring the real-life circumstances of migrant populations. The intentions of the migrants, such as the intention to migrate onwards or not, the duration of the migration process, and the relationship between legal status and transit are some of the points which remain unclear when the term 'transit migrant' is used (Düvell 2014). The term *mobistasis* has been suggested as an alternative, framing transit as a point of waiting during the asylum journey (Yıldız and Sert 2019). According to another approach, which focuses on trajectories, analysis should be based on the procedure of moving through space (Schapendonk et al. 2018).

During the time of my fieldwork, Greece was going through the sixth year of a financial crisis, which was threatening the collapse of the economy. The state had to cope with an unsustainable debt, economic activity was down by 25%, and circa four million Greeks were alleged to be living on the breadline (Pryce 2015). With austerity measures having resulted in increased poverty, the inequalities found before the economic crisis -between women and men, locals and migrants, large and small employers, and secure and precarious workers- were reproduced in the uneven distribution of the effects of the aforementioned measures (Vaiou 2014), with non-EU migrants experiencing extreme negative effects, as they usually work under precarious conditions. According to the OECD (2015: 30), the 2008 economic crisis disproportionally affected the foreign-born and, in particular, the many third-country nationals who were concentrated in sectors most highly affected by job losses. At the same time, large numbers of them arrived just prior to or during the crisis.[50] Increased competition for informal work (Cavounidis 2013), as well as poverty, unemployment and discrimination became the everyday life of the majority of migrants living in Greece.[51]

In 2015 the *SYRIZA* party was elected, following the rule of *Nea Dimokratia*, which had been characterised by restrictive immigration policy,[52] the dismantling of public services and the introduction of new legislation restricting workers' rights (Athanasiou 2014). Moreover, in 2012 the extremist far-right party Golden Dawn had entered parliament for the first time. Terms like 'ethnic purity' and 'racial unity' had re-appeared in the public sphere (Karyotis and Skleparis 2013), while politicians were describing immigration as a threat to national identity and social cohesion, as well as a security issue, with the Greek state being under attack (Swarts and Karakatsanis 2012; Tsoukala 2011; Zetter 2007).[53] In this general climate of financial crisis and insecurity, coupled with anti-migrant feelings, social tensions between Greek citizens and migrants became part of everyday experience for migrant populations. Greece may, in other

[50] Since 2006-2007, the unemployment rate of the foreign-born has increased by 17 percentage points, compared with 11 points among the native-born (OECD 2015: 30).

[51] According to an article in the daily *Kathimerini*, focusing specifically on the life of African migrants in Greece, they "face an 'impossible' life", lacking housing, employment, money, and being constantly discriminated and attacked (ekathimerini 2012).

[52] Shortly after taking power in 2012, the *Nea Dimokratia* government launched the operation *Xenios Zeus*, conducting identity checks to verify the legal status of individuals who were presumed to be living in the country as illegal migrants. Police sweeps, invasive searches, and arbitrary detention were characteristic of the operation (Human Rights Watch 2013).

[53] In 2012 Nikos Dendias, Minister of Public Order, called immigration "a bomb aimed at the foundations of society and of the state" (Dabilis 2012).

words, have become an increasingly diverse society, however, popular attitudes remained xenophobic and anti-migrant (Zafiriou-Zarifi 2017). In 2015, while the economic crisis was continuing, huge numbers of refugees started crossing the Aegean Sea, leaving from Turkey and arriving at the Greek islands. During this second crisis, named the 'refugee crisis', over one million people took this route in 2015 alone (Clayton and Holland 2015).[54]

In this context of crisis and anti-migrant feelings, the participants of this study, female members of a visible minority, were often targeted as *others* and faced everyday racism. Their narratives are full of examples of racist attacks, mostly in the form of verbal abuse. Moreover, being ignored by the Greek state due to their status as not only migrants but also women, they find themselves oppressed in yet another way. Similar to male-oriented approaches in various countries, that view female migrants in supporting roles as wives and mothers instead of giving them the status of an independent migrant (Indra 1999; Pessar and Mahler 2003), migrant women in Greece are usually seen as part of the family, joining their husbands through the process of family reunification (Cavounidis 2003; Tastsoglou and Hadjikonstanti 2003). By assuming that men are the heads of households (Karakatsanis and Swarts 2003), immigration laws in Greece have been reproducing traditional notions of women's dependency on their husbands. This tendency is reflected in the legislation, as provisions are made for family reunification, trafficking, domestic violence and mixed marriages, while a large number of other categories, such as unmarried or single mothers, are ignored (Zaphiriou-Zarifi 2017: 16).[55] According to a report of the European Network of Migrant Women (2011: 2) the status of migrant women in Greece is "characterized by a lack of social recognition", reflecting a "multi-faceted problem concerning migration, gender and human rights". The aforementioned status of my participants will be taken into consideration in data analysis, as it is conducive to the power relations they find themselves in, while they are navigating their everyday lives as Sub-Saharan African migrant women living in the city of Athens.

[54] Karamanidou (2021) explores the relation between domestic policy responses and the EU, focusing on the challenges inflicted upon the 'principles of justice', as EU policies place pressure on the Greek asylum system while measures which aim at supporting Greece, like for example the FRONTEX or relocation to other member states, have proven insufficient.

[55] A characteristic example is found in the legislation concerning residence permits and their renewal, as married women are neither allowed to apply for a residence permit nor for its renewal on their own. This does not take into consideration factors like separation or unemployment of the husband, who will, consequently, be unable to extend his own permit as well as the permit of his wife.

3.2.1. Immigration policy

It could be argued that the Greek state views immigrants as a necessary evil, rather than an opportunity (Triandafyllidou 2009); a perception that has, since the mid-1990s, informed the thinking behind four regulatory programmes providing legal status to some migrants living in Greece, while trying to reduce illegal migration through control mechanisms. The first law was implemented in 1997 and stipulated proof of a minimum number of days in legal employment as a prerequisite of the right to apply for a residence permit. Although the high unemployment rates, coupled with the reluctance of employers to pay social insurance contributions, made it difficult for a large number of migrants to meet these criteria (Triandafyllidou et al. 2009), this regularisation programme resulted in 371.641 migrants obtaining a residence permit (Kasimis 2012). However, it is estimated that less than half of the migrants living in Greece were registered during this procedure (Kasimis 2012). The second programme, initiated in 2001, aimed at adressing irregular migration while primarily taking into consideration the needs of the Greek labour market (Triandafyllidou 2009); a more pragmatic approach that resulted in regularisation of status for some 400.000 migrants (Kasimis 2012). The third law was introduced in 2005 and received the limited number of 150.000 applications (Kasimis 2012). The last programme, introduced in 2007, included some positive changes, particularly for those who were not able to collect the necessary social insurance contributions. Moreover, a certification of having submitted an application was introduced, resulting in an "intermediate" status of being legal until a decision on one's application is made. This certificate was necessary due to delays in processing applications, and many migrants lived for years possessing only this legal paper. Many participants of this study mentioned carrying this certificate with them or having lived possessing only this document for a considerable time.

Citizenship in Greece has long been based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, making it attainable mainly by transmission from parent to child (Baldwin-Edwards 2008). In March 2010, the *PASOK* government introduced a legislative reform in an attempt to facilitate Greek nationality acquisition for migrants, with a special focus on children who were born and raised in Greece.[56] However, this reform was suspended in 2013 by the Council of State. In 2015, a new law, based on the legislation of 2010, was passed, marking a major change, as it enabled citizenship for large numbers of long-term residents of Greece as well as children of foreign

[56] Apart from granting citizenship to children born and raised in Greece, the new law extended to migrants the right to vote and participate as candidates in local elections (Anagnostou and Kandyla 2014).

parents born and/or raised in Greece. The most recent legislation (March 2019), contains a series of amendments to the Greek Citizenship Code designed to meet Greece's obligations as a signatory of the UN Convention on Human Rights. These include citizenship for older applicants and the disabled, as well as for stateless Roma who live in the country.[57] It also reduces the application fee from 700 to 550 euros.

As many of the participants of this study do not possess any kind of residence permit, despite the fact that some have been living in Greece for as long as twenty years, a brief mention of the pink card is necessary. According to Greek legislation, all asylum applicants are issued with a temporary permit, known as the pink card. This document allows them to stay in the country while their application is being processed, and has to be renewed every six months. According to several participants, the Greek authorities were at one time making it quite easy to obtain this document. "They were begging you to get the pink card", one participant said, "especially if you were pregnant". Consequently, many women found themselves in possession of a pink card, which they renewed until they could find some other way to legally stay in the country. This policy seems to have changed in the last years and the women who arrived in Greece after 2005 did not mention any kind of facilitatory treatment on the part of the Greek authorities.

3.3. The African diaspora

African identities constitute problematic discursive constructs, partly due to the fact that ideas about Africa are not straightforward, and have, for centuries, been constructed as being in opposition to the West. From fifteenth-century painting and the creation of an "African object" to nineteenth-century ethnology,[58] Africans have been perceived as marginalised, exotic, primitive *others* (Mudimbe 1988). Greece has largely adopted this construction of the African *other*, aligning to the idea that Africans are lacking in terms of culture, intelligence and beauty

[57] The majority of the Roma living in Greece possesses Greek citizenship. However, approximately 5% do not have a birth certificate (Divani 2002) and are consequently lacking ID documents. When they apply for citizenship, the Greek state often denies them Greek nationality, claiming that they are nationals of other countries, like for example Bulgaria (Alexandridis 2003).

[58] According to Foucault (2002 [1970]: 411) "ethnology has its roots […] in a possibility that properly belongs to the history of our culture, even more to its fundamental relation with the whole of history. […] There is a certain position of the Western ratio that was constituted in its history and provides a foundation for the relation it can have with all other societies. […] Ethnology can assume its proper dimensions only within the historical sovereignty –always restrained, but always present– of European thought and the relation that can bring it to face with all other cultures as well as with itself".

(Kompatsiaris 2017). These approaches are now considered not only anachronistic but also racist, and concepts such as cultural hybridity, conviviality, and Afropolitanism[59] are only some of the notions used by scholars working on related topics (Eze 2014). One of the reasons African identities are hard to describe is related to the fact that any discussion on African identities is at the same time an engagement in a discourse about Africa, whose image is at least as complex as that of African identities, "being at the same time a reality and a construct whose boundaries have shifted according to the prevailing conceptions and configurations of global racial identities and power" (Zeleza 2006: 14). Modernist and postmodernist discourses that divided the world into developed and developing, into the Global North and the Global South, together with colonial imageries of race and racial categories, have shaped the ways African identities are perceived by the West (Ndhlovu 2014: 26). Consequently, the analytic tools provided by Western thought can be seen as a limitation to the ways these identities are addressed by academic scholarship.[60]

The participants of this study belong of a large group of people originating from Sub-Saharan Africa and living outside their countries of origin, constituting the African diaspora. This group is not homogenous, as it encompasses people with different statuses –political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, overseas communities– who are, however, part of a group, as they "feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with their country of origin" (Shuval 2000: 41). Myths of homeland, memories of the past, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland and a collective identity are some of the features of diaspora identities (ibid). However, as diaspora groups are not defined by homogeneity, essence or some form of purity, they should not be described by using the traditional, imperialising and hegemonising form of ethnicity (Hall 1990: 235), which would see them as "a logical, deterritorialised extension of an ethnic or national group" (Tsagarousianou 2004: 52). Diaspora communities are more flexible constructs, they are a form of imagined communities, continuously reconstructed and reinvented by their members (ibid.). This reconstruction results in a form of hybridity, as diaspora identities constantly reproduce themselves through an interplay of transformation and

[59] As an analogy to the Cosmopolitan, the Afropolitan has been defined as someone who, "on the strength of birth or affinity, can call any place in Africa his or her place, while at the same time being open to the world" (Eze 2016: 114).

[60] Moreover, as far as Greece is concerned, there has been a lack of information of African identities, both in public discourse and in academic research. Tsekenis (2020) constitues, therefore, a major contribution, as it is an anthropological approach to African identities, written in the Greek language.

difference (Hall 1990), while their members are, at the same time, part of an "ongoing transnational network of dispersed people who retain a sense of their uniqueness and an interest in their homeland" (Shuval 2000: 43). The participants of this study belong to a network which has been described as the *New African Diaspora*, a relatively recent and rapidly growing global movement of emigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, currently living outside the African continent, that has experienced a rise in size, public profile, and self- awareness in the past two decades (Koser 2003). The Nigerian diaspora forms a substantial subset of this population.

3.3.1. Languages and national identity in Sub-Saharan Africa

The participants of this study come from three West African countries, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra-Leone. Before moving to a short description of these countries, the limitations of country of origin as an analytical tool will be addressed. During the colonial era, borders on the African continent were decided upon in an arbitrary way, ignoring local cultural and linguistic realities, and have largely remained in place to the present day. National identity in Africa is, therefore, radically different from the European context. The ideological correspondence between a nation and a language, which resulted in the Romanticist language nationalism that characterised the growth of nation-states in Europe from the 19th century onwards, is not to be found in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with only a small number of exceptions (Simpson 2008: 12). A detailed analysis of nationality in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the historical facts and factors that led to post-colonial Africa goes beyond the scope of this study. However, it is important to mention that, due to its colonial history and the way African states were drawn on the map, country of origin as an analytic tool is defective in many ways. In this context, ethnic group membership, as a defining factor of a persons' identity, becomes even more important. Ethnic groups are communities that pre-date nations, who need not occupy a common territory, and share common myths and historical memories that are much more plausible than the equivalents of nations (Barbour 2000: 6). A high level of shared cultural norms, together with a usually shared language, make ethnic group membership a factor strongly influencing a person's identity. However, in the context of migration, including migration to Greece, the aforementioned categorisations are usually ignored. Ethnic group membership and national identity are not perceived as important, defining factors of a person's identity, and all Sub-Saharan African migrants, sharing what is perceived as the same colour of skin, are described as simply African and/or black. This homogenising view ignores the migrants' specific

characteristics, trajectories, life stories, languages and identities, creating instead a group of 'them Africans' as being radically different compared to 'us Greeks'.[61]

In the context of migration and diaspora communities, language plays an important role in identity construction. However, similar to the concept of nations, the notion of languages, divided into monolithic and determinate forms, as developed in the European context, does not apply to Sub-Saharan Africa. Such an image reflects the colonial organisation of the world, which celebrates homogeneity over plurality (Ndhlovu 2014: 25), and does not describe the diverse linguistic landscape of most African countries. The co-existence of indigenous, national and colonial languages is the norm in this region, with their use differing in each and every country, as various interconnected factors lead to the use of one language over another.[62] In general, it can be argued that national and colonial languages are used in official contexts, including education[63] therefore restraining indigenous languages to the domain of the private (Okombo 1999; Kioko and Muthwii 2001). Consequently, speakers usually do not identify with official languages, as they are either the language of the colonial rule or a language used by the state which is not their native language. Exceptions can be found in countries where a lingua franca or a common language is present, like for example Swahili in East Africa. However, even when a lingua franca is present, loyalty to an ethnic group may still be stronger than identification with speakers of the same language (Simpson 2008: 13). Moreover, due to the continent's complex history, there is often a discrepancy between the "population's relationship and sense of belonging to a nation-state and the identity of an individual nation-state within the international order" (McLaughlin 2008: 95). This can be highlighted using the example of

[61] The perception of Africa as a country has been wide-spread in the media and is still found in many articles about the continent. A characteristic example is an article in *The Times* focusing on alcoholism in Kenya which is entitled Africa's drinking problem (Hatcher 2013). In the last decades, several academics have pointed to the stereotypes arising from this perspective. Moreover, initiatives like for example the *Africa is a country - not a continent with 55 countries*, aim at raising awareness about this homogenising tendency and its negative, generalising effects on the ways African countries are perceived (https://www.africasacountry.com).

[62] In the past decades a link between development and language has been established, with some researchers explaining development-related problems in African countries as a result of their linguistic plurality (i.e. Khame 2012; Dhewa 2010). These approaches have, however, been criticised as simplifications and today most researchers believe that multilingualism does not have to be a burden on development (i.e. Bamgbose 2003; Neville 2009).

[63] In many African countries, less than 30% of the adult population is literate and educated in the colonial languages, resulting in a move towards the use of indigenous languages in the education system, at least in the early years of schooling (Chumbow 2005: 170). Among other arguments in favour of the use of African languages in education, support has been given to the democratization of access, made possible by the use of African national languages, as the languages the people know best (ibid: 171).

Senegal, a predominantly Wolof-speaking nation described as francophone in the international scene (McLaughlin 2008).

3.4. "The field": West African female migrants in the city of Athens

The participants of this study belong to the West-African population of Athens. It is hard to find reliable sources concerning migrant populations residing in Greece, as the high numbers of arrivals since 2015 have put pressure on an already inflexible state mechanism, resulting in large numbers of unprocessed applications. These unprocessed files, together with a rising number of undocumented migrants, makes it difficult to provide exact numbers. Reliable data can, however, be given on the population residing in Greece before 2015. According to Papadopoulos (2012), in 2012 the majority of migrants living in Greece came from Asia (58%) and Africa (21%), and the biggest groups of Sub-Saharan Africans originated from Nigeria and Ghana, followed by Ethiopia, Somalia, DRC, Guinea, and Senegal. The average time these immigrants had resided in Greece was 6.6 years. Concerning their education, only 14% had not continued after primary school, while 27% was found to be in possession of a university degree. The majority lived in the centre of Athens, in Kipseli and other neighbourhoods around Patision Street (Papadopoulos 2012).

These populations, being already at least bilingual at the time of migration, bring various languages to their new country of residence. Upon arrival in Greece, they are exposed to an additional language, which is added to their linguistic repertoire. This study focuses on the multi-lingual population of female migrants residing in the city of Athens and coming from three English-speaking, West African countries: Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. Bearing in mind that to speak of a West African population and identity is a simplification,[64] this group was chosen primarily due to its linguistic complexity. Because of various historical reasons, most West African communities are multilingual. Apart from being functionally bilingual in more than one native African language and able to understand and use these languages in various contexts and environments in everyday life (Baker 1993), participants of this study have grown up in a country where diglossia[65] was imposed in times of colonization and is still

[64] West Africa is a geographic region consisting of different countries with a distinct history during the time of colonization and after independence. In most of these countries, French is the official language of the state. The linguistic complexity of the region is unique (Adegbija 2000).

[65] Following Fishman's significantly extended definition, diglossia can be found in all West African countries, with education and written communication taking place in French or English, and an African language used for everyday

common practice, with one major European language used in official texts and education and local languages used in everyday communication although, usually, not taught at school.

The decision to focus on English-speaking West African women only, excluding those who come from French-speaking countries, was not based on theoretical assumptions formed prior to embarking on the fieldwork. On the contrary, it was a result of my experience during the first months in the field, as it became clear that there is only limited contact between the French- and the English-speaking West African migrant communities in Athens. Cultural differences, together with the lack of a common language, could serve as explanatory factors. As I participated in community events, workshops and everyday life events, I came to realise that a European language, French or English, was the language of communication, when more than one country of origin (or ethnicity) was involved. As the first contact with the community was made through the United African Women Organisation[66] (UAWO) in Athens, who use English as their language of communication –resulting in their members coming almost exclusively from English-speaking African countries– I first had access to the English-speaking population. As I met many women through these first contacts, I decided to focus on this sub-group and not include French-speaking West African migrants in my study. The choice of participants was, in other words, mainly a practical decision. The women who participated in the study had a common language both with the researcher and with each other and came from a region called West Africa. This common geographic origin does not necessarily imply that they form a category, a group or community, especially prior to migration, as there are significant differences between their countries of origin. Moreover, the results of the study do not support the existence of a West African migrant identity in the context of migration.

communication (Fishman 1967). The latter often does not have a written form or, if it does, its use is not widespread. Diglossia according to Ferguson's stricter definition, with the dichotomy between written and spoken forms of related varieties and the relative stability of both being established not only synchronically but also diachronically, was present in Greece as well (Ferguson 1972b). However, clear differences arise if one compares Greek and West-African diglossia. In Greece diglossia concerns two varieties of one language. Moreover, the demotic language had coherent rules which were written down into a grammar book by Triandafyllides in 1938, while this is not the case for many African languages. Additionally, a cultural difference can be found, as in Greece the use of the demotic language was by no means a sign of low education, as many Greek intellectuals used this language in written texts (Alexiou 2001). This is not the case in West Africa, where the majority of written texts are formulated in French or English.

[66] The United African Women Organisation was created in 2005, as an initiative of Lauretta Macauley from Sierra-Leone, who still holds the position of president. The Organisation's aims and objectives are to create awareness of various issues concerning African women and their children living in Greece, to support and fight for their rights and the rights of their children, to create mutual bonds of solidarity between Africans and Greeks, to explore and incorporate the rich African woman heritage into the rich Greek heritage and to work hand in hand with various social, NGOs and other Organizations that stand for justice and a non-racial and friendly society for all. (https://www.africanwomens.gr/)

However, an African identity was often mentioned, with no distinctions made between West and East African migrants.[67]

Similar to the focus on English-speaking migrants, the focus on women only was not a decision made by the researcher before contacting the community. On the contrary, in the beginning the aim was to work with both male and female migrants. However, as first contact with the community was made through the UAWO, in the beginning the participants were female migrants active in this network. The sample then expanded through these women and their social relations to other women of their communities. After meeting several members of these communities, it became clear that there are big gender differences between West African men and women living in Greece. In their narratives, the women indicated the importance of gender, attributed problems to gender differences and attitudes to gender characteristics, and created bonds based on female solidarity. Although I attempted to reach the male population, I soon realised that there is a gap which is hard to bridge, which can be attributed in part to my being a woman. Furthermore, I came to realise that my work with women only created a link of female solidarity, which could be jeopardised if I were to contact male members of the community as well. Consequently, I decided to focus on women, while using information about men as supportive to the arguments and findings.

3.4.1. Racism and other forms of oppression

The participants of this study belong to a group of migrants who are hyper-visible in the Greek context due to their skin colour. Even if they learn the language and are willing to integrate, they will always be perceived as *others* by the majority of the Greek population. Moreover, their hyper-visibility makes them possible targets of everyday racism as well as violent racist attacks, which have experienced a sharp rise in Greece in the last years. According to the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN), non-Greeks are attacked mainly based on their characteristics as foreigners, because of their skin colour or any other characteristics revealing their non-nativeness. In its annual report, the RVRN (2018: 6) mentions that support for racist violence has increased, as attacks are carried out by groups which proudly profess their extreme xenophobic ideologies. Aggressive actions by citizens in everyday aspects of urban life have also been recorded. Because of their visibility, African migrants are prime targets of these

[67] Many women mentioned religion, faith, skin colour and African origin as major characteristics shared with other (female) African migrants.

attacks, resulting in a general heightening of feelings of fear and insecurity amongst their communities.[68] In her study focusing on the everyday lives of African women living in Athens, Zaphiriou-Zarifi (2017) concludes that her participants experience everyday racism on various levels. Racist attitudes are reflected in bodily encounters, as any form of physical contact with them is avoided, especially on public transportation. Routine othering encounters, graffiti with phrases such as *immigrants out of Greece*, and racist comments from neighbours belong to their everyday experiences as well. Urban space, Zaphiriou-Zarifi (2017) argues, has become a place of conflict, as many Greeks perceive the presence of Africans as a transgression of what has traditionally been 'their' space.[69]

Apart from overt, aggressive racism, colour-blind racism is prevalent in Greece as well, resulting in the projection of stereotypical images of Africa and Africans even in cases where the speaker/writer claims to be aiming at the opposite. In an article in the newspaper *Kathimerini*, for example, which focuses on an initiative to enhance the mobility of African students by giving them the opportunity to study in Greece, the journalist starts with the following sentence: "Not once had it crossed the mind of Joseph Thukia, son of a single mother in Kenya, that one day he would step on an airplane and go to Europe" (Karaiskaki 2019). The image of a poor African boy is projected straight away to set the frame on what is going to follow.[70] In another article, entitled *Little Africa in Athens* which focuses on the lives of African migrants in Greece, the opening sentence goes as follows: "Having grown up in different parts of a 'forgotten' continent, six African fellow citizens recount the adventures they have lived in Athens" (Vaitsopoulou 2017). However, out of the six African participants, three are Nigerian, one is South-African, one comes from Zambia, while the sixth's country of origin is not specified; he is described simply as being an African, a person who "grew up in a small town

[68] According to RVRN (2015), discrimination and hostility can have a major impact on the migrants' ability to work, their economic and personal security, and their health and well-being, all of which leads to further marginalisation. Racist attacks in Greece are, however, not a new phenomenon and the situation prior to the economic crisis should not be idealised. In 1978, for example, the newspaper *Apogevmatini* published an article claiming that 15,000 blacks were responsible for the stagnation of salaries, as well as the rise in criminality and the use of drugs, living in illegal conditions and having created a Harlem in the centre of Athens (cited in Abog-Loko 1981).

[69] The conflict between members of a group who perceive a space as their own, therefore claiming their right to define acceptable and normal behaviour, and other groups living in the same public space and following different norms of acceptability, is found not only when local populations meet migrants but also when other groups, like for example homosexuals, claim their public existence (i.e. Kantsa 2010).

[70] In many countries stereotypical images of Africa are not only found in the media (Abraham 2003) but also in fundraising campaigns of NGOs (Dolinar and Sitar 2013) and in stereotypical images of black identities (i.e. Sailes (1998) about black masculinities in sports).

and now lives in a basement in Platia Koliatsou". Again, the stereotypical image of a homogenous, poor Africa is reproduced.

Consequently, the participants of this study find themselves navigating a hostile environment, facing racism together with other, multiple forms of oppression due to their identities: as being not only African migrants, but also women, mothers, unemployed and/or living in precarious conditions. All aforementioned social categories are mutually constitutive (Yuval-Davis 2013) and should, therefore, be seen as intersecting with each other. Racism in Greek society, be it overt, subtle, violent or colour-blind, interacts with sexism and other structures of oppression, resulting in complex systems of domination and suppression (Kilomba 2008). All of the above will be taken into consideration in the analysis of the women's narratives, for it has crucially shaped both what is said and what is omitted.

3.4.2. The participants of this study

The participants of this study come from three English-speaking West African countries: Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra-Leone. With a population of 188 million people, Nigeria is the largest of the three. The country's population grew rapidly in the last decades, increasing by 57 million from 1990 to 2008, with a growth rate of 60%. Nigeria's population is young, as 35% of the country's inhabitants are under 14 years of age, and its literacy rate amounts to 61.3% for the male population and 41.4% for females, providing evidence for gender differences concerning access to education. At the same time, 53.5% of the population lives below the poverty line (African Statistical Yearbook 2018). The country is characterised by linguistic and ethnic diversity, with the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Igbo being the three largest ethnic groups. In addition to English, the official language, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fula, and English Creole are widely spoken. The country has a past of military coups and violence. In the last years, Boko Haram has been responsible for attacks and as many as 37.000 deaths, especially in the north of the country.

Compared to Nigeria, Ghana is much smaller, with a population of approximately 29 million. A variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups lives in the country. The Ghanaian population is young as well (37% under 14 years old) and its literacy rate amounts to 81.1% of the male and 65.3% of the female population, with the percentage being higher than the one in Nigeria. However, a similar pattern of gender difference arises concerning access to education and subsequent literacy rates (African Statistical Yearbook 2018). Compared to Nigeria, the

percentage of the population living below the poverty line is much smaller in Ghana (15.2%). The official language of the country is English. The largest ethnic group are the Akans, who comprise 47.5% of the Ghanaian population. Nine languages (Akan-Twi languages, Dagaare, Dangbe, Dagbane, Ga, Kasem, Ewe, and Nzema) are supported by the Bureau of Ghana languages, a government agency for the promotion of the languages of Ghana, and materials such as books to teach students in first grade are published in these languages. In the past decades, Ghana has been politically stable, an image which is reflected in the doubling of tourist arrivals between 2009 (668.000) and 2017 (1.278.000) (African Statistical Yearbook 2018).

Finally, Sierra Leone is the smallest of all three countries, with a population of only 6.5 million. The country's population is the youngest of all three (42.1% under 14 years of age), its literacy rate is the lowest (59% for males and 38.2% for females), with gender differences similar to the other two countries, and more than half of the population lives below the poverty line (African Statistical Yearbook 2018). The country's official language is English. Krio, the creole language based on English, is the language spoken by the largest part of the population, followed by Mende, Temne and Limba. A brutal and long-lasting civil war, a number of coups and the political instability which followed have resulted in the country being socially and financially unstable.

After having conducted a year of fieldwork and having contacted a large number of women from the three aforementioned countries, I ended up focusing on 19 women, three from Sierra Leone, three from Ghana and 13 from Nigeria. The age of the participants varies between 30 and 52 years. They have been in Greece from five to thirty-two years, with an average stay of approximately 9 years. The women's education varies, with only two of them not having attended any kind of schooling and not being literate in any language, while three stopped after primary school and five are in possession of a secondary school degree. Nine had started studies at university level, however, only four finished their studies and obtained a university degree. Concerning employment, more than half of the women were either working at the time the interviews took place or had worked in the past, while all of them stated that they would like to work (again), but were facing difficulties finding employment. All women who were either working or had worked, mentioned employment in the informal sector: cleaning houses, offices, restaurants or bars, and taking care of elderly people and/or children. None of them had managed to find another kind of occupation. Those who hold university degrees stated that it was impossible for them to find employment in their field of expertise, even when they speak the Greek language quite well. Therefore, education does not seem to play a role concerning

employment possibilities in this community, as those who did not attend school are doing the same jobs as the ones possessing a university degree.

Concerning their status in Greece, all three women from Sierra Leone have resided in the country for more than 20 years and are in possession of residence permits. In the group of Ghanaians, one has refugee status, one is a pink card holder and the third has a three-year residence permit. In the group of Nigerians, six women are in possession of residence permits (one to ten years), four are pink card holders, and three do not have any kind of legal papers. On the whole, the majority of the participants have a residence permit (ten women), while six women are pink card holders, and three have no legal status. As far as their trajectories of migration are concerned, the following image arises: all women who have been in Greece for a period exceeding ten years, having arrived before 2005, entered the country legally by obtaining a visa at a Greek embassy in their country of origin. After arriving in Greece, they did not leave when their visa expired and started applying for residence permits. According to their narratives, in the past (meaning before 2005) it was not difficult to apply for legal status and most of them were given a pink card, a document normally reserved for those applying for refugee status. The picture changes radically regarding those who migrated after 2005, as they all followed irregular migration trajectories, overland, passing from Turkey to Thrace, or by sea, starting at the Turkish coast and arriving at a Greek island, with the exception of those who came through the process of family reunification. However, as only six out of nineteen women came to Greece following their husbands, the image of the dependent female migrant does not seem to hold for the participants of this study. Two women are victims of trafficking and have experienced extreme violence. Concerning their family situation, the majority (16 women) are mothers and most of them have given birth to their children after migrating to Greece. Three of them have left their children in their countries of origin, with their families taking care of them. Finally, all women are living in the centre of Athens, with Pedio tu Areos or Patision being the points around which they gather.

As far as their linguistic profile is concerned, all women were at least bilingual upon arrival in Greece, with some of them speaking as many as four languages. On the basis of their Greek language skills, they can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of those who have limited knowledge of the language and, although able to follow simple conversations, are unable to express themselves (10 women). The second group consists of those are proficient in the language (6 women). All the women belonging to the second group picked Greek as the language of communication during the interview, while those in the first group chose to

communicate in English. However, both groups are not homogenous and could be divided into smaller subgroups according to more specific linguistic criteria. Amongst the group of women who are fluent in Greek, differences are to be found in their ability to read and write, ranging from good competence in both domains to inability to read and write, sometimes combined with illiteracy (2 women). The same holds for the women who claim that they don't speak the language, as it turned out that some of them have a fairly good understanding of what is said but have difficulties answering back in Greek, while others are lacking any linguistic skills. Three participants can be attributed neither to the first nor to the second group, since they are rated as intermediate, i.e. able to express themselves, if they are familiar with the topic and if their interlocutor adapts to a slower and clearer way of speaking.

Concerning the languages they speak with their children, the majority (10 women) stated that they use mainly English; only 4 mainly speak their native African language with their children, while 3 stated that they taught them both. However, all participants said that they want their children to understand their mother's respective African language/s as well, with arguments ranging from the language being an important part of the children's identity to the possibility to communicate with their families, if they would go to visit them or if they would decide to move back to the mothers' country of origin. Many women said that they are the only ones who can teach their children this language and it would be a pity if they did not. However, English seems to be more useful in the context of migration and despite their disappointment when speaking about their children's linguistic skills in their native language, most women opt for English as the language of communication inside the house, even if both parents come from the same ethnic community. Bourdieu's notion of linguistic capital seems to have influenced their linguistic choices as far as family language policy is concerned.

To sum up, the participants of this study form a diverse ad hoc group, with differences found not only concerning their countries of origin, but also their education and linguistic background, their migration trajectories, their work experience and their family conditions. Incidentally, the only homogenous part of their identities is their identification as Christians, belonging, however, to different churches and attending them on a regular basis. Despite this heterogeneity, the challenges the participants face in their everyday lives are similar, as they are a result of them belonging to the community of African migrant women living in the city of Athens. While keeping in mind individual and group variation, this study sees the participants as part of a larger group facing similar challenges. Individual differences and variation due to country of origin and/or other factors will be mentioned wherever necessary.

3.5. Methodological tools and theoretical assumptions

This study positions itself in the field of linguistic ethnography. Its goal is to study a set of linguistic structures used by the participants and to analyse them as identity markers. As linguistic forms need to be linked to "interactional moves and then to broader identities, social structures, cultural processes, and ideologies" (Bucholtz and Hall 2008: 158) in order for meaning to be adequately deciphered, a significant ethnographic component in linguistic work is deemed necessary. The methodology used in this study follows the long tradition established in the field of the ethnography of communication, involving prolonged engagement with the community studied, triangulation of sources and thick description (Creswell 2006; Riazzi 2016; Atkinson 1992). I entered the field using a constructivist grounded theory approach. According to the grounded theory framework, the researcher does not test her pre-existing theoretical assumptions but constructs her research questions based on authentic data (Hadley 2017). In other words, the research questions emerge in the field (Strauss and Corbin 1994), while theory is built on discovered data, avoiding preconceiving interpretations and relying on comparative methods (Glaser 1992). The grounded theory framework was further developed by researchers who rejected its objectivist, positivist assumptions and placed priority on the phenomenon instead of the methodology (Charmaz 2008). According to the constructivist grounded theory framework, grounded theory strategies should be seen "as useful tools, not as rigid prescriptions" (Jørgensen 2001: 6397). Moreover, this approach takes into consideration the observers' interpretative frames, biographies and interests as well as the research context, which are all considered factors influencing the data. Following this framework, this study sees the categories which emerge during data analysis as constructed through the researchers' interpretation, assuming that every analysis is at the same time an interpretation of reality rather than an objective reporting of facts (cf. Jørgensen 2001). My aim by opting for this approach was to co-construct a dialogue, which would be fair to the diversity of my interlocutors, letting the themes and foci of my research emerge through data collection and analysis of the material gathered during a pilot study. As far as data analysis is concerned, I relied on insights from various approaches, combining a Critical Discourse Analysis framework (Blommaert 2017b, 2013a, 2001) with insights from the work of Wodak (2008) and van Dijk (2009, 2008b, 2000) concerning the methodology of discourse analysis.

The categories analysed are, therefore, neither the result of assumptions on the part of the researcher nor were they decided upon solely based on the findings of other studies. On the contrary, all categories were formed during data analysis and are based on the material the

women provided me with. They are, in other words, their own categories which emerged during data coding, based on an emic approach, according to which cultural patterns are investigated and explained from the standpoint of one immersed within a system (Mason 2014). According to this approach, "emic knowledge is essential for the intuitive and empathic understanding of a culture" (Gobo 2008). In contrast to an etic approach, which views the material analysed from the perspective of the one who does not participate in the culture studied, the emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system (Pike 1967: 37). However, the emic should not be authorised at the expense of the etic, as the descriptive information obtained through an emic approach should be developed into a generalized theory that can be used to elucidate all sorts of human behaviours (Harris 1979). Therefore, the combination of both approaches can lead to more reliable results, with etic knowledge being vital for cross-cultural comparisons which require both unitisation and categorisation (Mason 2014: 1). Moreover, a solely emic approach is hard to achieve, as the researcher not only classifies the events according to their significance but s/he also decides on what incident will be attributed the status of an event in the first place (Emerson 2001: 48). Reflecting the viewpoint that "etic and emic, the universal and the historical particular, are not separate kinds of understanding" (Agar 2011: 39), this study adopts a framework which combines both approaches, with an emic perspective serving as a basis for the formation of categories paired with an etic approach during data analysis.

My fieldwork lasted 18 months and consisted of working closely with members of three national groups. As already mentioned, the first contact was made through the United African Women Organisation (UAWO). While working with the members of the UAWO, the first step was a period of familiarisation, which lasted three months. Through attending workshops and meetings as well as supporting their events and discussions, I gained insights into their everyday lives, and mutual trust was gradually built. Participant observation has been an important component of my work with this community, especially during the first months, as it not only gave me valuable information on various topics, including language, but it also enabled a fluid, close-to-ordinary interaction among the women as well as between the women and the researcher. In this setting, the observer's paradox (Labov 1973) and the construction of self which takes place during an interview, where both interviewer and interviewed play a role specific to the context of the interaction and might therefore alter their usual behaviour, are minimised. The longer I stayed in the women's environment, the more invisible I became, resulting in the participants not filtering what they were saying, at least not as much as they did

during the first meetings. These interactions were not recorded, but detailed notes were kept after each meeting. The resulting field work diary was not directly included in data analysis. However, it constitutes an important source of knowledge, which made data analysis possible through access to the participants' worlds. A large number of assumptions, inferences and categories used in data analysis are based on this knowledge.

After spending the first months using mainly participant observation, which included participation in seminars as well as the active support of the goals of the UAWO (as for example by attending their gatherings or proofreading and co-writing various texts they produced), I had developed personal contact with many members. These personal relationships resulted in my spending time with them and accompanying them to various tasks which were not necessarily related to their role as members of the UAWO, as well as attending special events, for example, birthdays or church celebrations. After these first months, I had gained the trust of many women and was meeting them on a daily basis. Moreover, I had taken over a double role. Firstly, I had become an informal supporter of the UAWO, as several members were seeking my advice on various topics, whether these were language-related issues, like for example help with writing up texts or communicating with the authorities, or issues which were directly related to the Organization, such as setting up strategies or selecting volunteers. Secondly, I had started teaching Greek as a foreign language as part of the program of the UAWO. These courses were open not only to members of the Organisation but to any African migrant woman interested in learning Greek.

The decision to get engaged in language courses served a number of purposes. Firstly, through teaching I was given the opportunity to create stronger bonds with the community, as I was meeting the women on a regular basis and engaging in a common activity with them. Moreover, I gained access to a bigger number of women, as those attending the courses and those who were active members of the UAWO were not necessarily the same. It has, in other words, been a research method I used in order to gather information related to my project and to approach a larger number of participants. These courses were a valuable source of information, as they gave me the opportunity to closely observe the way the women learn, interact and react to the Greek language as well as the way they interact with each other in the context of a language course. My engagement with teaching consisted of a beginners and an advanced class, once a week each, for a period of over a year. However, apart from my research goals, I conducted these courses because I strongly believe that speaking a language is a tool for empowerment as well as a means to fight for a better life in a country. Consequently, I

decided to offer Greek language courses as a sign of gratitude to the women I was working with.

After having formed bonds with the members of the UAWO as well as with the group of women who were attending the language courses I taught on a regular basis, my network started expanding and it soon included other women from the aforementioned countries of origin, who were not active in the UAWO. Through a method that resembled snowball sampling, I gained access to women who were more "hidden", as they did not claim an activist role nor were they, for various reasons, attending language courses. These contacts were extremely valuable and resulted in the formation of a more balanced picture, as a study including only active migrant women or women who were attending language courses would give a distorted picture of this community's goals as well as of the everyday lives of its members.

At the same time, I contacted another organisation working with migrants, called Ena Paidi Enas Kosmos (EPEK) (One Child One World). This organisation focuses on the rights and well-being of migrant children, as part of a vulnerable population, often facing hardship and social exclusion (https://paidi-kosmos.gr/). A social service, a psychological support department, a programme teaching migrant children the Greek language and supporting their general cognitive skills, and a program for their mothers to learn Greek, constitute the core activities of EPEK. My involvement with EPEK consisted of sitting in at Greek language courses. The participants of these courses were mothers whose children were taking part in the afternoon programme of the organisation, receiving tutoring in the Greek language as well as in a variety of courses taught at Greek schools. In following these courses, my goal was to further engage with the community and establish contact with more women. The main purpose of observing Greek language courses taught by someone else was that in this setting I would not hold the active role of a teacher. By staying in the background, I had the opportunity to better observe what was going on during language courses, being what Duranti (1997: 101) has called an accepted bystander or a professional overhearer, focusing on my research through paying close attention to comments, ways of interaction, language use, language attitudes and power relations. This was not possible when I taught a course myself, as my attention was then focused primarily on my role as a teacher and only secondarily on my role as a researcher.

3.6. The research encounter

When I approached the women I intended to work with, I informed them straight away that I was engaged in a research project on migrant women and language. However, it was only after having formed bonds of mutual trust, that I asked the ones I knew best, if they would be interested in talking to me in detail. I then conducted interviews with those who replied positively to my invitation. The interviews were conducted in the place which suited the women best: in cafes, restaurants, parks or their houses. I always let the women choose the location of the interview, as I wanted them to feel as comfortable as possible. Data were collected in the form of autobiographic narratives produced during semi-structured interviews. As far as my approach to interviewing is concerned, I aimed at following a combination of "reflexive awareness of, and engagement with, the emotional, embodied and performed dimensions of the interview" (Ezzy 2010: 163), as these factors have been described as facilitators of solid interviewing in the literature. Keeping in mind that interviews can be experienced as either conquest or communion (ibid.), I tried to conduct the interviews while giving as much space as possible to the interviewees and guiding them only subtly to the topics of discussion. I aimed at giving myself the role of an attentive witness and not that of an active huntress, aiming at penetrating the mystery of the other (Irigaray 2001: 27).

My approach to interviewing sees the research encounter as a setting with a strong performative element, with both sides, interviewer and interviewee, performing specific kinds of identities, while adapting to their interlocutor and to the artificial context of the interview. The research encounter is, therefore, seen as a setting in which cultural practices and social values are performed, contested and reinforced (Oakley 1999), while the interviewees draw not only on personal experiences but also on wider cultural narratives when producing what is afterwards considered their "own" stories (Moen 2006; Taylor 2010). Frameworks of acceptability and normality (Miller 2007) together with the fact that the audience is not restricted to those present during the interview, but includes multiple and imagined audiences who are influencing what is and what can be said (Riessman 2008) makes the analysis of these narratives a complex procedure, with context playing a decisive role.

Moreover, the data produced are not influenced only by the wider cultural and social realities of the participants' lives. The presence of the interviewer *per se* shapes the content and the form of communication, making the interview a co-construction of both sides involved (Riessman 2008: 31). This view of narrative data as co-constructions is widely accepted amongst researchers working with language and identity. The role of the interviewer should,

therefore, not be underestimated during this process, as s/he contributes to shaping the production of talk, no matter how objective s/he might claim or try to be. Therefore, "an awareness and analysis of interviewers' talk in producing both the form and the content of the interview" (Rapley 2001: 304) can lead to a better understanding of the different ways identities are produced locally and collaboratively (ibid.: 310). Apart from the interviewer's presence, the expectations of both sides, together with what is thought to be acceptable and judged as good by the researcher (or what the participants think the researcher judges as acceptable and good) influence the identities the interviewees will perform during the research encounter (i.e. Collins, Shatell and Thomas 2005).

As gender influences all aspects of social life, gender performance is expected to play an important role in shaping the data produced by the interviewees. A lot has been written about the gender dynamics at work during interviews (i.e. Devault 1990; Oakley 1981; Broom 2009; Golombisky 2010) and the positive effects gender congruence can have on data production, with female interviewers considered more able than men to access the real, hidden experiences of other women (e.g. Hamberg and Johansson 1999). However, such accounts have been criticised, as they approach gender in a simplistic way, treating it as a property of the individual, an attribute of the person which manifests itself independently of other characteristics, rather than as "a set of interactive processes that form a system of subordination" (Oakley 1999). Social and cultural factors, together with age, ethnicity and social status have been found to influence the power relations between women in the interview setting as well (Cotterill 1992; Reinharz and Chase 2001; Roer-Strier and Sands 2014) and should therefore be taken into consideration during data analysis, as "reducing a dynamic down to gender is erroneous and researchers need to be aware of the multiplicity of factors which shape emergent accounts" (Broom, Hand and Tovey 2009: 57).

Apart from gender, race and social class are considered relevant in this study as well, as they play an important role in the creation of inequalities and in the establishment of power relations, which are not likely to be entirely mitigated even after prolonged engagement with the community studied. Linguistic barriers and the absence of shared cultural practices and references pose an additional obstacle. As Blommaert (2005: 225) puts it, "we all enter our research sites under particular socio-historical conditions, and these have an effect on what we see, perceive and understand". I approached these women being a middle-class white Greek woman living in her country of origin. Therefore, I would always stay an outsider to their community. However, I did not assume that I was hierarchically in a more convenient position.

Although the women were experiencing hardship and did not have access to many of the commodities I was enjoying in my everyday life, I did not consider them victims. According to Duranti (1997: 94), "the victimisation of research subjects is patronising and racist, as both sides have their own plans, ideas and goals and must fit into their interlocutors' lives." I granted my participants a voice, trying not to impose my views and/or my research agenda on their needs, while systematically acknowledging and reflecting on my own position.

Concerning the research ethics of this study, the first and foremost concern when conducting research with vulnerable populations is their safety. Most scholars agree on the *Do No Harm* approach, according to which research should reduce any possible risk for its participants, both on a physical and on a psychological level (i.e. Van Liempt and Bilger 2012; Wood 2006; Anderson 1999). In order to ensure protection of my participants, their identities were anonymised.[71] As far as their participation in the study is concerned, I always informed my interlocutors that I was conducting research. When I was interested in conducting an interview with one of the women, I used informed consent forms, making sure that they received information about my research, that they understood what they were agreeing to and that they were able to decide whether they wanted to participate (Ellis et al 2007: 467). Interestingly, all women agreed without hesitation to the recording of the interview. Many of them stated that they had nothing to hide and were, therefore, at ease with the recording procedure.

During the interviews, the women were free to pick the language of communication (either English or Greek), as well as switch from one language to the other, using whatever made them feel more comfortable. In all cases, although it had been stated in the beginning that the focus would be language, the discussion was not limited to this topic and no attempt was made to guide the women back when they started elaborating on other subjects. In most interviews the women started by telling their stories and were only willing to speak about something different, like for example language, after they had given a detailed account of themselves and their trajectories of migration. Keeping the characteristics of the community I was working with in mind, a focus on language only could have been perceived as lack of respect and could have eliminated trust. On the contrary, through the process of opening-up and sharing, the interviews turned into emotional experiences for both sides involved and the data gathered were as natural as possible. Despite all aforementioned attempts to create a setting

[71] The president of the UAWO, Lauretta McCauley, referred to as L. in data analysis, agreed on making her identity identifiable through her words.

where the women would feel comfortable and would be willing to open up and share their experiences with the researcher, the influence of socio-historic and cultural norms were not ignored as factors restraining these possibilities, and will be taken into consideration in data analysis.

Interviews were recorded and the parts relevant to the research topic were transcribed. The transcriptions were done in the language of the interview and an English translation is provided whenever Greek is used. Transcription includes pauses and other non-lexical information as well as prosody and turn-taking. Accent and detailed phonological characteristics are not included, as they are not relevant to the research questions. The transcription conventions used are based on Heritage and Atkinson (1984). Despite the effort made to be fair to the world of the participants, this study acknowledges that transcription is not an innocent act, as it is always selective (Ochs 1979) while constituting, at the same time, an act of interpretation on the part of the researcher, who decides on what parts of the interviews will be transcribed and included in the analysis based on his/her assumptions of what is important or trivial (Elliott 2005) as well as his/her identity and research goals.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY THROUGH THE USE OF PRONOUNS

4.1. Introduction

During communication abstract content is paired with linguistic structures, taking up a form and becoming an utterance with certain, tangible characteristics. Similar to content, form carries meaning as well. Therefore, its analysis should not be a solely structural one, as this would result in ignoring the different meanings it is imbued with. For example, grammar, besides its structural features, is "a mode of social interaction" (Schegloff, Ochs and Thompson 1996: 29), therefore making its interpretation far more complicated than the structural analysis of grammar itself. Similar holds true regarding syntax and vocabulary. Moreover, linguistic structures are used in context by people who communicate with each other. Consequently, their analysis should take contextual and interactional data into consideration. This chapter aims at analysing the use of a grammatical feature, personal pronouns, with particular emphasis on the pronoun *we* as used by the participants of my study, in order to determine the interactional goals of the speakers, the contexts of its use, its motivation and the relation of all aforementioned to identity construction.

The focus on pronouns is based on the importance of this structure concerning categorisation and identity. According to Pavlidou (2014: 154), analysing pronouns as a way of categorising groups of people during interaction is "a promising way for grounding the sometimes elusive abstract categories in members' own analyses of real moments of social interaction". The goal of this chapter is the aforementioned grounding of identity categories as well as their combination with participant intentions, identity construction and ideologies. A combination of a textual approach, that views human utterances as an interplay of voices (Bakhtin 1981, Fairclough 1992) and discourse as text with linguistic features (vocabulary patterns, grammar, cohesion, text structure), with a discursive approach, that sees communication as a product of interaction, making narratives discursive constructions with linguistic, rhetorical and interactional properties (Pavlenko 2007) will serve as the basis for data analysis. Historical, political and social contexts of production will be taken into consideration as well. The theoretical framework of this study, a combination of discourse analysis and anthropological linguistics, will inform the results obtained through the interviews.

4.2. Pronouns as identity markers

Analysing form is of paramount importance in this study, as it brings to the foreground parts of the participants' identity which are not explicitly stated and might not become obvious through the analysis of content alone. It stands, in other words, for analysing the micro-level of communication, which is shaped by the macro-level, i.e. by ethnicity, social class, gender etc. According to Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 10), "[...] features that used to be treated separately as macro – social class, ethnicity, gender, generation etc – can now be seen operating at the most micro-level of interactional process, as resources that participants can draw upon when making sense of what's going on in a communicative event". This interrelation of the macro- and the micro-level of communication makes analysis of form a rewarding field of research.

According to this line of thought, form is influenced by wider societal ideologies, giving abstract concepts like *identity* and *ideology* a tangible existence in discourse. Through the analysis of discourse, ideologies, traditionally seen as systems operating on the macro-level of communication, are found to be "complexes that operate in different shapes and with different modes of articulation at a variety of levels on a range of objects" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 11), one of them being the communicative event, providing the basic building blocks, the selection principles of relevant norms and values, and the structural organisation of social relations (van Dijk 1990). Ideologies are, therefore, closely related to power. According to van Dijk (1990: 177) "ideologies are in part self-serving, and developed and applied in such a way that group members' social cognitions and practices are geared towards the maintenance of overall group interests." Ideologies of dominant groups aim, in other words, at maintaining existing hierarchies. Through discourse - the social practice of speech (Archakis and Tsakona 2012) - the aforementioned abstract ideological systems are given a tangible existence, making its detailed analysis a source of valuable information concerning the interrelation between ideology and text. As discourse "(…) discloses the ways in which widely distributed societal ideologies penetrate the microscopic world of talk and text" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 11), thus contributing through their presence to the (re)shaping of social reality (Johnstone 2002: 3), analysis of discourse becomes, at the same time, analysis of ideology.

According to the theoretical framework adopted by this study, identities are neither rigid nor existent independently of the context of interaction. They are, on the contrary, selected and constructed during narrative discourse, making analysis of discourse a valuable source of

information on the speakers' self-identification as well as their perception of their interlocutors' identity. According to Archakis and Tsakona (2012: 8) "what we are is directly associated with where, with whom, why, and how we interact", with fluidity not being limited to identity construction on the part of the speaker, as discourse is not perceived in a fixed and objective way by the recipient either. Consequently, the decisions concerning the way a message is decoded are associated less with its content and far more with the recipients' own identities (Joseph, 2004: 24), making the co-construction of identity a crucial component of interaction.

The focus of this chapter is set on the use of personal pronouns as identity markers. By using personal pronouns, the participants ascribe themselves certain characteristics and claim roles and identities through acts of agency. Today's super-diverse environments are characterised by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, but also in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration (Vertovec 2010). The predictability of the category 'migrant' and of his/her sociocultural features has disappeared (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 1), making categorisation problematic and self-categorisation even more interesting. By using personal pronouns, the participants perform acts of categorisation of themselves as well as others while claiming identities in the context of migration.

Setting up group boundaries is an important strategy for the aforementioned claiming of identity, with each group defining itself in relation to others by identifying similarities and stressing differences. The use of *we* foregrounds these boundaries and repeats them during interaction, stating that "we are what we are because they are not what we are" (Forgas and Tajfel 1981: 124 in Duszak 2002: 2). According to Tajfel, identification with a group is based both on awareness of inclusion as well as on sentimental commitment and attachment to this act of inclusion (Tajfel 1982). Through the use of pronouns, acts of inclusion are highlighted while, at the same time, boundaries are brought to the foreground. By opting for the first person plural the speakers claim group membership for themselves and for others who are either present in the course of interaction or implied by the use of the respective pronoun. Similarity and/or difference stand in the centre of this process.

4.3. Power and indexicality

Communication *per se* exposes participants to power relations, as they find themselves in predefined contexts playing predefined roles. However, these are not as rigid as they might first seem. Rather, they are negotiable –and indeed negotiated– in the process of interaction. During communication, participants may resist the way they are positioned by others, as subordinates or as members of a group they do not wish to be identified with. In this context, the special characteristics of the research encounter have to be taken into consideration, as interviews constitute a particular form of social interaction (Czarniawska 2004), a particular occasion for a particular form of talk (Kelly 2008), therefore creating their own social reality (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). They are what Silverman (2006) calls a contrivance. In the artificially constructed context of the interview, the participants present themselves according to the interviewer and the questions asked. Their own expectations form the encounter (Mishler 1986; Silverman 2006), making analysis of all aforementioned factors necessary in order to understand what motivates the use of linguistic structures. According to Cameron (2001: 178), given the radically asymmetric nature of research encounters, "it is not uncommon for research subjects to resist the way they are positioned by an interviewer's question". These are often interpreted as projections of identity characteristics the participants might not identify with. The answers they produce are consequently not just designed to convey relevant factual information, but also to address what the respondent rightly or wrongly believes to be the intentions and preconceptions behind the question (Cameron 2001: 148). The use of personal pronouns can, thus, be seen as a form of resistance to the aforementioned projections of the researcher onto the subjects of the study or to the characteristics the subjects assume the researcher projects on them. Indexicality plays an important role in this context, as form consists of indexical signs, which stand for meanings and can only be adequately decoded through underlying shared knowledge. The relationship between signs with implied meanings and socially shared interpretations makes indexicality a rich site for the empirical study of ideology (Hall 1980: 133). Study of form is, therefore, also the study of ideology.

Signs are, however, not limited to language. Communication is largely affected by signs which are not lexical and carry information about stances, identities and ideologies. These non-lexical signs are not as much under the conscious control of participants as their lexical utterances. According to Goffman, "[i]ndexical signs are also unintentionally 'given off', with consequences that speakers may have little inkling of" (Goffman 1959: 14 in Blommaert and Rampton 2011). Although non-lexical signs play a decisive role in communication, this study

will focus on lexical signs only, as the analysis of non-lexical signs and their indexical meanings goes beyond its scope.

Due to their complexity, pronouns are interesting examples of indexical categories which have both semantic/referential and indexical/pragmatic meaning, and whose referential value depends on its indexical value (Silverstein 1976). This "non-specific, minimally characterizing nature of deictics" (Sidnell and Enfield 2016), such as pronouns, with their "semantic deficiency" (Levinson 2004), makes context indispensable, with indexical relations being crucial to contextual inference, reflexivity and semantic interpretation (Hanks 1999). Therefore, deep analysis of the social and cultural concepts of speech are necessary in order for processes of indexical anchoring to be understood (Hanks 1999: 125). According to Ochs (1992), the indexical connection between a linguistic form and a social identity is not direct, with identities being constructed through several complementary relations. Due to its complexity, the personal pronoun *we* is an extremely interesting index. While other pronouns, as for example the pronoun *I*, invoke a double indexicality, "my place as a material singularity in space and time as an embodied speaker, and my standing as an individual in the local moral order" (Harré 2014: ix), the pronoun *we* is far more complex, as it refers to regions in space and time which are less specified. Moreover, whichever collective the speaker defines herself as a member of is brought into the here and now of communication. However, this collective is only a fragment of all collectives the speaker belongs to. By stating her belonging to a specific group, the participant brings certain characteristics to the foreground while others remain hidden. This chapter aims at analysing the collectives brought into the here and now of communication with the researcher by the participants of my study, while analysing their motivation of use as well as its implications for communication.

In this study, the use of two languages in the interviews creates a methodological problem as far as data analysis and comparability of results are concerned. English and Greek differ in the use of personal pronouns, with Greek being a pro-drop language with rich inflection, where the first person plural can be realised in different forms (e.g. pronouns, bound forms, zero-forms, pronominalized nouns), in contrast to English, where the pronoun is necessary in order to clarify the speaker. However, this chapter does not aim at analysing all uses of the first person plural deixis. The analysis of data from both languages will focus on excerpts where the inclusion into a group is interesting in relation to the context of use, the course of interaction and/or the ascription of identity characteristics. Therefore, examples from both languages will

be included and each language will be analysed taking into consideration the grammatical forms available to its speakers.

4.4. The pronoun *we*

In this section I will focus on the use of the pronoun *we* and the alignment with different groups of people on occasion. In the data analysed, the women use the pronoun *we* in order to include themselves in the groups of Africans in general and African women in particular, people coming from their countries of origin and/or their ethnic groups, as well as inhabitants of Greece in general and Greeks in particular. In some cases, the category the women belong to has to be inferred as it is not clearly stated. The ethnolinguistic perspective offers valuable insights for determining this category. According to the results, the participants use the pronoun *we* when they want to i) explain their choices as part of a process of normativity, ii) claim knowledge and citizenship, iii) refer to shared negative experiences, iv) refer to positive characteristics of a group they belong to, v) refer to negative characteristics of a group they belong to. This chapter, which is structured alongside the aforementioned categories, aims at defining the identity characteristics arising from inclusion in these groups as well as the different interactional goals pursued by the women through the use of personal pronouns in the aforementioned contexts.

4.4.1. Normativity and *we*

The women often use the pronoun *we* when they refer to a cultural practice typical for a group they belong to. By including themselves into bigger groups and presenting their actions as practices which can be ascribed to group membership, their choices are represented as common for these groups. As the women belong to a minority group (even before we go on into minutiae of subcategorizations and their multiple minoritarian statuses as not only Africans, for instance, but as West Africans, Nigerians, Igbo etc.), their actions and choices are often seen as differing from what is perceived as normal by the majority of the Greek population. By including themselves in groups of people with similar characteristics, the women claim normality for themselves and their actions, indexing practices within a minoritarian, yet immediately identifiable, group.

The following excerpt comes from the discussion with G. concerning her children and their schooling:

(1)

R: And the kids eh (.), did they ever have problems at school?

G: Hmm (.) It is ONLY my first daughter but it is not serious problem, it is only children problem.

R: Did she have problem with [other children]

G: [only::::]

R: or teachers?

G: No, NOT TEACHERS. When she enter nipio ((Greek for 'preschool')), they used to sing for her, it's the only black child there in the class, they will be singing mavro mavro mavro mavro ((Greek for 'black black black black') ((she sings a melody)), when they come back they will be asking, why::: is our colour different from others, that is the ONLY problem they have.

R: The other kids used to sing mavro mavro ((Greek for 'black black'))?

G: Yes for her and she used to cry. At that stage, but now even her best friend is a Greek girl.

R: Is she still the only black child now in her class?

G: No. Ok now in her class (.) yes.

R: And in the school there are many.

G: There are many yes.

R: Where do they go to school?

G: Very close to my house.

R: Kipseli?

G: Ehm::: ((thinking)) What do they name? What did they call that name there? It's very close to our house. Grava.

(…)

R: And the others don't have problems?

G: After their nipio ((Greek for 'preschool')) because of that they went to Nea Ionia. That is where my first daughter, she finished her primary school in Nea Ionia, there is one school for foreigners, it is dimotiko ((Greek for 'primary')) school.

R: It is far from you.

G: Because they don't know Greek by then, after the nipio ((Greek for 'preschool')), my first daughter, she doesn't know Greek because me I don't speak Greek, for me to help her in the house when she was around six years I cannot, because of that, that is how other Nigerian some of them used to do, <u>we</u> send our children there.

In this excerpt G. uses the pronoun *we* to include herself in the group of Nigerians living in Athens. After a general discussion about the problems her children have faced at school and her mentioning that it was only racist comments from other children that her first daughter experienced as a problem when she went to a regular state school close to her house, G. continues by saying that this was solved by sending her to another school in a different neighbourhood, an intercultural school tailored to the needs of migrants. As G. had mentioned how close to her house the regular state school was, the researcher commented that the intercultural school is far away. G. explains her choice by the fact that she cannot help her daughter because of her lack of knowledge of Greek and is therefore obliged to send her to this special school. This might be perceived negatively by the researcher (and the group she stands for), as the child has to drive a long distance every day, while the regular school would be almost opposite their house. Consequently, G. refers to a group she belongs to, namely Nigerians, and states that this is a common practice among Nigerians, continuing with an overt use of the first person plural: *we send our children there.*

In this example, switching to the collective pronoun *we* could index some kind of trouble. Pavlidou (2014: 160) offers a similar explanation for the occurrence of a pronoun which could as well be omitted in Greek, a zero subject language, with explicit mentioning of pronouns bearing extra pragmatic meaning. In a language like English, where pronouns cannot be omitted, this extra pragmatic meaning is achieved through switching to a different pronoun. However, Pavlidou (2014: 181) continues her analysis on pronoun use in Greek by saying that trouble is not the only explanation, as an "argumentative stance on the speaker's part toward

the on-going interaction" could serve as an explanation as well. This seems to hold for this excerpt, as it is unclear if G. is troubled by the projection of the researcher (or by what she assumes to be a projection on her). Following this analysis, the use of the pronoun *we* could be a result of G.'s argumentative stance towards the comment of the researcher, resulting from a perceived disagreement concerning the importance of distance, compared to other reasons which could have motivated her to choose this specific school for her child to attend.

G. prefers not to discuss in detail the reasons this school is suitable for her daughter or to provide arguments on the reasons she chose this school over another, but rather finishes the discussion by attributing her choice to a wider practice of a group she presents herself as part of, leaving the researcher little space for further questions on the topic. By presenting herself as part of a community when providing an explanation for her choice, G. finds herself sharing a cultural practice with people from the same part of the world, and her use of *we* at the same time constructs an in-group which clearly excludes the researcher. In English the first person plural pronoun can function both inclusively, with the addressee being part of the collectivity the speakers refers to, and exclusively, presenting a collectivity the speaker is part of, while at the same time excluding the addressee (Pavlidou 2014: 4). The aforementioned distinction is pragmatically motivated. According to Duszak (2002), the pronoun *we* can be skillfully managed in discourse in order to construct, redistribute or change the social values of in-groupness and out-groupness by opening up a number of referential and pragmatic options, especially the inclusive-exclusive distinction. In this excerpt G. makes use of this distinction and excludes the researcher from the collectivity she refers to. The choice of the exclusive *we* serves as a form of protection against possible criticism, casting the researcher in the role of an out-group member who does not have access to the group the speaker refers to and does not share their cultural capital. In addition, by introducing a collectivity, the speaker is not presented as the only one making this choice, they are many, and through this shared practice they gain power in claiming validity for their decision.

Moreover, the researcher's comment on the distance between the school of the children and their house might have been perceived as a threat to G.'s face, and her strategy to protect herself is the overt mention of a bigger group she belongs to. Brown and Levinson (1978) propose that some communication acts are intrinsically face-threatening and various strategies are used to minimize the risk, while at the same time maximizing payoffs. These techniques may include strategies for maintaining positive face, such as paying attention to others, showing a strong interest in their affairs, or "pointing out the common in group memberships" (Scollon

and Scollon 1995:37). The last strategy mentioned is used by many participants of my study, including G. In this excerpt, use of the first person plural and inclusion in an ingroup can be analysed as a technique G. utilises in order to mitigate what she perceived as a face threatening act on the part of the researcher. G.'s answer is, in other words, part of a process of claiming normativity, which aims at encompassing her personal choices into larger patterns and thereby indexing group membership as a form of protection.

In this context, the use of the pronoun *we* by G., a Nigerian migrant living in Greece, could be seen as a manifestation of the cultural characteristics of the group she belongs to. It has been often argued that a crucial difference can be found between the perception of the person in the Western world and its African counterpart, with the first following a Cartesian view, attributing the individual specific qualities which make her a person, while the latter regards the community as the axiomatic principle around which everything evolves. This notion of the communal self results in the person in Africa being described as collective. Both perceptions of the person have been criticised as oversimplifications. The Western individual, the autonomous person, has been described as "an *imaginaire*, an ensemble of signs and values, a hegemonic formation" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991: 60), which does not exist as an unmediated sociological reality either in Europe or any place else to which it has been exported (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 267). Concerning the African conception of the person as being collective, the critique has focused on the fact that it assumes the existence of an egalitarian social context in which individuals acquire personhood (e.g. Oritsegbubemi 2013: 205). However, this does not seem to exist, with gender, seniority and social class being only some of the factors influencing the person's position in society, their social relations and their subsequent access to full personhood. The communitarian view of personhood has, moreover, been criticised as being based on non-epistemic sources, the result of a counter-colonial practice, driven by a will to assert difference between the coloniser and the colonised (Oritsegbubemi 2013: 210). In this process resistance and cultural reaffirmation have been found to play a crucial role. The aforementioned power struggle results in an oversimplification in approaching the concept of personhood, making it a historical concept whose analytic value and utility in current discourse remains narrow. Finally, a generic account of the African conception of personhood cannot be given, as it does not seem to exist, as the African continent, "as diverse as it is large, has spawned alternative modernit*ies* in which very different notions of selfhood, civility, and publicity have taken root" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001: 268). This critique is not meant to assume that there is no difference whatsoever between the way the

participants of my study define the person compared to its definition in the Western world (cf. Tsékénis 2017). However, a simplistic attribution of the use of the pronoun *we* to the collectivity of personhood in African contexts does not seem to hold as an analytic tool.

A similar example on the use of the pronoun *we* is found in the words of D. who expresses herself about the way children are raised and how they should be raised according to her point of view. This topic is of great interest to most of the participants of this study, with the majority being open about the way they raise their children and showing interest in discussing the topic. When asked how she raises her children in Greece and whether she thinks there is a difference between Greek and Nigerian mothers and their respective child upbringing, D. answers:

(2)

R: So you have 3 kids and you raise your kids here. Do you think there are big differences if you see how like Greek women raise their kids and how you raise your kids?

D: There is a big difference, there is a big difference, there is a big difference.

R: Where?

D: The MONEY to buy ANYTHING for the child. This woman have the money to buy a lot of different kinds of food (xxx) of things for the kids (xxx) when they need. So when I have the money I use, me I don't have, so I don't always buy food for them and like clothes. (xxx) So there are a lot of differences.

R: Ok. And also in terms of, apart from things you buy, like the way you raise them is it the same?

D: The way I raise them is the same but you know (.) we (.) we raise our kids in a different way.

R: What do you mean?

D: You know we like them to listen to you, to obey you. You know some Greeks, their kids don't obey them. They do SHOUT, they do a lot of things. We like to make them not to behave like them because at times at the school they do tell them (xxx), when they do something we use to beat them to correct them but not too hard but you have to correct the child.

R: You think that Greek children don't listen to their parents?

D: A lot of them.

The subject may differ from the first example, but the pronoun use in this excerpt serves a similar purpose. When speaking about the way Greek and Nigerian mothers raise their children, D. uses pronouns in a strategic way. When asked about the differences between the two groups, she starts answering in the first person singular, referring to poverty and saying that she is unable to provide her children with the goods a Greek mother can provide hers. In this context, it is important to note that the researcher met D. in a program of support for mothers in need. Consequently, D. is not ashamed to state that she cannot buy things for her children. On the contrary, she provides details of everything she cannot buy. In this part of her answer, she uses the pronoun *I* and does not include herself in the group of people with similar problems: other (Nigerian, African and/or migrant) mothers facing hardship.

However, the perspective changes when the topic shifts from material goods to ideologies of child-rearing. D. includes herself in the larger group of Nigerian mothers, who raise their children in a different way to Greeks. This difference is first stated in a sentence with an interesting contradiction: *The way I raise them is the same but you know (.) we (.) we raise our kids in a different way.* In this sentence, the speaker brings similarities and differences together, only to continue by associating their way of bringing up children with positive characteristics, in contrast to the Greek way, which, she believes, results in disrespectful and disobedient children. She continues by referring to a practice she most probably understands the researcher does not approve of, namely, hitting children. After having compared Nigerian and Greek children and having come to the conclusion that the Nigerian way yields better results, she continues by saying that they hit their children, and, directly afterwards, adds that they *do not hit them too hard*. Through the use of *we* and the inclusion of herself in a bigger group with shared cultural practices, D. protects herself from the criticism she anticipates on the part of the researcher. According to Mühlhäusler and Harré, "[b]y selecting *we* rather than another pronominal form, a speaker introduces a bond with his/her interlocutors. Through this, other persons are brought into an obligation pattern and the responsibility of the speaker is accordingly reduced" (1990: 178 in Pavlidou 2014: 12). Similar to the first example, where the speaker used the pronoun *we* to protect herself against possible criticism, in this excerpt the personal pronoun *we* also serves as a shield, reducing personal responsibility. D. is aware of the fact that there are differences between the way she sees things and the perspective of the

researcher, which reflects the point of view shared by a large part of Greek society. Although hitting children was considered an educational practice in Greece in the past, this is no longer the case and the vast majority of the population would, at least publicly, condemn this practice. By presenting herself as part of a group, D. feels strong enough to express her disagreement and describe her way of doing things as an acceptable cultural practice. According to Pavlidou (2014: 12), *we "*shares or diffuses agency from the individual speaker to a collective subject, and eventually diminishes the speaker's own responsibility". In this excerpt, D. is not solely responsible for her decision; she is following cultural practice as a member of a group with similar behaviour, which endorses her practices.

Similar examples are found in many interviews, with group membership used as a mechanism to protect the women against possible criticism for various reasons, as for example for their lacking linguistic competence in the Greek language. In the following excerpt F., a Ghanaian woman who has been living in Greece for almost 15 years, answers a question about her linguistic competence:

(3)

R: So in the Ghanaian community who speaks better, the men or the women, if you can say?

F: The men (.), I can say the MEN.

R: Why?

F: Because of their job, why. Their job because some of them work with the Greek MEN and they don't know English. <u>We</u> women, sometimes NORMALLY more, most of them, the madams <u>we</u> are working, they speak English (hmmmm), they speak English, many many madams they speak English, so <u>we</u> cannot pick from them.

In this example, F. includes herself in the group of Ghanaian women who work as domestic help in order to account for her lack of linguistic abilities in Greek. Interestingly, the majority of the women who took part in this study were either working as domestic help or had worked in this sector in the past. According to many of them, despite the financial depression, it is still quite easy to find a live-in job in Athens, taking care of children and being responsible for the household. Coming from English speaking countries, the participants of this study possess the linguistic skills necessary in order to communicate with their employers already upon arrival in Greece. Therefore, many of them are easily included in the so-called transnational serving class

(Mirchindani 2004), being turned into “servants of globalization" (Parreñas 2001) who do not suffer from the language barrier many women from other countries are confronted with (Lorente 2018). However, as most of them have children of their own, after some years in Greece they do not want this kind of employment any more, stating that this kind of work is a temporary solution in the beginning, when there is nothing else for you to do, or when you don’t have legal status, as you can stay hidden in your workplace. When asked about her linguistic abilities, F. presents herself as part of this large group of women, employed in what seems to be the main source of employment for female workers worldwide. As part of this group, F. is not alone in being a woman who has lived in Greece for a long time without learning the language. The other members of the group she belongs to find themselves in a similar situation. This seems to be an international tendency, as “women who join the ‘care drain’ are most unlikely to speak the language of the host country or they may have only limited proficiency in it” (Piller and Pavlenko 2009: 17). According to Piller and Pavlenko (2009), from the employers’ perspective, non-existent or limited proficiency in the majority language may be an advantage, as domestic work gives access to the most intimate details of a family, and limited linguistic abilities may serve as a distance between the family and the domestic worker.

Consequently, the families might not support the women in learning Greek. In this excerpt, F. claims group membership as a form of protection, as it is not her unwillingness to learn but the life situation she finds herself in, which should be held responsible for her limited knowledge of Greek. In this context, it is important to note that since she arrived in Greece, almost 13 years ago, F. has never worked as domestic help. During the last years, her workplace has been a company which is responsible for cleaning buses. Before that she used to work as cleaning personnel in restaurants and bars. Since she arrived in Greece, she has never worked with a Greek woman, *a madam*, as she calls them. On the contrary, she has been working in an environment where knowledge of Greek would be useful, as explained by her in another part of the interview.

(4)

F: I need Greek when I was in my working place, sometimes they brought in some sheets, everybody would sign but I say, maybe it was that we were signing something that we have not collected, so I was asking why are <u>we</u> signing this and they started saying blablablablabla, and I did not understand. Because of the language I just also sign, they all sign, sometimes I say, why <u>we</u> are signing this, it says adia ((Greek for ‘paid leave’)),

that <u>we</u> are going to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')), but we did not go to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')), so they sign and if I question them everybody would say that you should sign. Sometimes I can read the heading of the papers and they have the dates with the adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')) and the money. All the paper, everything, is in Greek.

In this part of the interview, F. claims that knowledge of the Greek language would be useful in order for her to understand the papers she signs at work. Being able to read them would put her in a position of power, as she would be able to claim the rights she is entitled to, such as, for example, paid leave. However, when asked about language competence (excerpt 3), she prefers to include herself in the group of women from her country of origin who work as domestic help and to claim for herself a professional trajectory she does not share with them. This decision can be attributed to the fact that positioning herself as linguistically competent or as a linguistic novice does not end at the interactional level. It creates an image of herself as a certain kind of person, which is projected to the *here and now* of the interaction with the researcher. As every positioning related to language competence enters a chain of ideologisation (Bucholtz and Hall 2008), F. prefers to present herself as part of the group of women coming from her country of origin and working as domestic help, rather than define a special trajectory for herself, implying a separate identity with different characteristics, which could leave her open to criticism.

Moreover, if one compares the use of *we* in excerpts 3 and 4, it becomes obvious that F. shifts perspectives according to context. This is made possible through the "inherent fluidity" of the first person plural pronoun, "[b]eing a combination of an 'I' and a 'non-I', 'we' brings together a stable side (the speaker of the utterance) and a potentially variable one" (Pavlidou 2004: 6), which can include or exclude the addressee as well as other people not present during interaction. This variable side is used strategically by F. as well as by other participants, as a form of protection against possible criticism on the part of the researcher, due to family decisions (excerpt 1), cultural differences (excerpt 2) or linguistic abilities (excerpt 3).

The aforementioned use of *we* in excerpt (3) can also be analysed as a non-prototypical use of the pronoun. According to Helmbrecht (2002: 42) "WE pronouns are often used to express an emotional or a social connection of the speaker to a group without referring to the speaker or without including the speaker in the group of individuals referred to". In these actions the speakers do not belong to the groups they refer to, as for example in the sentence *We*

declared war on Japan after Pearl Harbor. The first person plural is used in order to bring the strong connection between the speaker and the group s/he refers to to the foreground of communication. In this context, group membership is strongly connected to social identity, national identity and membership to an imaginary community (Anderson 1983), making the former an integral part of the speaker's self-identification. Through this process of identification, a language becomes symbolically linked to particular groups of people and emblematic of particular identities (Irvine and Gal 2000). This seems to hold for the absence of linguistic skills as well. Through a similar process of self-identification, F. associates lacking linguistic skills with an identity. Consequently, F. opted for the use of *we*, even if she does not share the same working conditions as the other women from Ghana living in Greece and working as cleaning staff at the houses of English-speaking Greek women, due to the fact that, on the whole, she sees herself as part of the imaginary community of Ghanaians and defines her identity through this act of membership.

In a similar example, S. uses the pronoun *we* when she speaks about the languages she has taught her children and their resulting linguistic abilities:

(5)

I made a mistake, I did not speak Igbo to them only English. That is the mistakes <u>we</u> [Nigerians] are doing.

Similar to F., who blames group membership for her limited linguistic abilities, S. presents herself as part of the bigger group of Nigerians in order to account for what she calls a *mistake* and does not hold herself solely responsible for her choice to speak English with her children. In other words, she invokes group membership as an excuse, attributing a personal decision, the fact that she did not speak Igbo to her children, which resulted in them not learning the language, to her belonging to a group of people coming from the same country of origin and making the same decision. The collective component of this *mistake* –its presentation as a wider Nigerian, rather than personal, practice– protects her from being criticised for what she calls her personal *mistake* in the beginning.

Interestingly, in all examples analysed so far, where the pronoun *we* was used for the speakers to protect themselves against possible criticism, and/or against what they think the researcher's projections might be, the women included themselves in the group of people coming from the same country of origin. In that sense, country of origin seems to be the safest

refuge when the women are criticised in the context of migration. The distinction between *us* and *them*, a distinction they have all been confronted with when facing racism, which will be analysed in the following part, is the same discursive mechanism they use when they want to protect themselves against possible criticism in a context where they perceive some kind of threat.

In all examples analysed so far the women are willing to adopt a collective perspective on their lives, presenting themselves as members of groups of people living in Greece, facing similar life situations and reacting in similar ways to what they experience in their everyday lives. The networks they belong to are characterised not only by common origin but also by shared (cultural) practices and similar goals and can therefore be described as communities of practice, whose members "participate with other members in a variety of practices that often constitute (…) identities and relations at one and the same time" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 1992: 3). In the examples analysed in this chapter, the collective pronoun *we* is used for the groups of Nigerian mothers following certain child-rearing practices, as well as for Ghanaian women working as domestic help. Both groups are characterised by mutual engagement and jointly negotiated enterprise (Meyerhoff 2006), and can therefore be seen as communities of practice rather than social networks. Through acts of belonging to these communities, the women claim a certain identity, defined not only through membership but also through the aforementioned shared practice. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 4), through their engagement in communities of practice, people "collaboratively construct a sense of themselves and of others as certain kinds of persons, as members of various communities with various forms of membership, authority, and privilege in those communities". In the examples analysed in this part, membership is defined through shared practice, making the women part of the communities of practice of migrant Nigerian mothers or Ghanaian domestic workers living in Greece.

4.4.2. Claiming knowledge, belonging and the use of *we*

The pronoun *we* is also used in order for the women to claim knowledge. K. for example says:

(6) *<u>We</u> Africans, <u>we</u> know Greek through the Bible.*

(7) *Because English is a popular language for <u>us</u> Africans.*

These statements associate African identity with positive knowledge and make K. part of the group of people sharing positive characteristics. In this context, it is important to mention that K. can neither read nor write, as she did not attend school. However, in example (6) she claims the identity of a knowledgeable woman and, more specifically, a woman with knowledge of the Bible, which is associated with faith and God, both of which bear positive connotations while bringing her, arguably, closer to any majoritarian group she may be contrasted with. Shortly after having claimed knowledge of the Bible, she continues by referring to the ability of Africans to use English (7), a prestige lingua franca, attributing one more positive characteristic to the group she belongs to. In these examples, *we* constructs a space where African identity is paired with knowledge. K. claims participation in this group while, at the same time, presenting herself as a citizen of the world. Moreover, through the connection of Greek with the Bible, she pairs faith with language competence. Participation in faith is reflected in language competence, which can lead, at least at a symbolic level, to her inclusion into Greek society. Claiming knowledge of the language can therefore be seen as an act of citizenship.

The concept of citizenship is neither clearly defined in the literature nor devoid of tensions, as it is closely related to politics, stances, beliefs and rights. Due to its complexity, citizenship can be seen as an abstract or an embodied category, with the first including 'the citizen' and the latter involving real people who are differing in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, stage in life, cycle, etc. (e.g. Pateman, 1998; Kymlicka, 1995; Lister, 1997 in Yuval-Davis 2011: 48) The de-homogenization of the notion of citizenship has been attempted by feminist scholars as well as anti-racists who have worked on the topic. In the example analyzed, K. claims participation in the abstract category of 'the citizen' of Greece, a person who is born in the country and possesses civil rights. The group K. belongs to is deprived of most of these rights by the Greek state. However, citizenship, the "participatory dimension of belonging to a political community" (Yuval-Davis 2011: 46), is not only something a state can grant its citizens but also an identity the inhabitants of a place can actively claim. In the aforementioned example, K. claims this right for herself as a citizen as well as for the group she belongs to.

Interestingly, K. decides to pair these positive characteristics with the group of Africans at large, not only with the people with whom she shares the same country of origin. Both characteristics - religiosity and knowledge of the English language - are not typical Ghanaian traits, but can rather be found in different African countries which were all former British colonies. By attributing these characteristics to the more numerous group of Africans, K.'s

claim for knowledge and citizenship becomes stronger, as they are many and they all possess the same positive traits, contrary to what is often projected on them in the context of migration.

A similar example is found in the words of F. who says:

(8) *African women, we learn Greek, especially Nigerian [women].*

F. is Ghanaian and she therefore does not belong to the second group she mentions, namely Nigerian women. However, she defines herself as part of the first group, women coming from Africa. Her decision to include herself in the group of African women by using the pronoun *we* is largely motivated by the assumptions she makes about her interlocutor, making this excerpt an example of the co-construction of identities in the interview setting. According to David Hume, the self is not derived in isolation but rather through interaction with others (Hume 1985 [1739]: 316). Building on this assumption, research interviews, as a form of social relationship (Dexter 2006), can be described as settings where both sides, interviewer and interviewee, actively construct identities through the course of the interaction (Elliott 2005). The self of the interviewees is, in other words, constructed by and through their interaction with the researcher, with power, as almost synonymous to knowledge (Foucault 1976), playing a decisive role. Consequently, in this excerpt F. constructs her identity influenced by the personality of her interlocutor as well as the assumptions she makes concerning the latter's opinions and beliefs. F. assumes the researcher would judge knowledge of Greek as a positive characteristic, as she has been teaching the language to African women herself during the time of her field research in Athens. At the same time, F.'s knowledge of Greek is limited, she understands a lot but is unable to speak. Nevertheless, she includes herself in the group of African women when associating them with language learning. This choice is motivated by her will to be part of a group with positive characteristics, especially as she knows this reflects the researcher's opinions as well. On a symbolic level, it can be seen as an act of citizenship through participation in the language of the country where she lives. However, she continues by creating subgroups and specifies that Nigerians are the ones usually learning Greek. Therefore, it is normal for a Ghanaian woman like herself to have limited knowledge of the language. In this example, different ethnic origins are used strategically in combination with the personal pronoun *we* in order to account for the speaker's linguistic skills while presenting herself as a member of different groups.

Concerning citizenship and agency, a very interesting example is found in the interview with K. who says:

(9) *If we foreigner can vote, Tsipra will get more than this.*

The analysis of this excerpt builds on the aforementioned claiming of citizenship in excerpts (7) and (8). In this example, K. expresses the view that foreigners would have voted for Tsipras, had they been given the right to do so. The interviews were conducted in 2014/2015. The interview with K. was conducted in March 2015, shortly after the election of a new government in January, with Tsipras as prime minister. On the whole, the participants of my study expressed positive feelings about his election, as they associate a better life for themselves with the administration of his political party. In this excerpt, according to K., Tsipras' percentage would have been higher if foreigners living in Greece had participated in the elections. While stating her opinions and political beliefs, she includes herself in the group of migrants by using the pronoun *we*, further specified with the word *foreigner*. K. compares the political beliefs of the group she belongs to with the majority of the Greek population. Through this comparison, foreigners are not found to be differing radically from the Greek population, which returned a majority vote for Tsipras as well. According to K., this tendency would only have been stronger if they had been given the right to vote. With this utterance, K. does not only state her inclusion in the group of foreigners and her political beliefs, but at the same time she projects for herself and the other members of the group she belongs to the right to vote for the government of the country where they live. As the vast majority of those who are not born in Greece do not possess this right, K.'s words can be seen as an act of agency, through a process of "active negotiation" with the discursive formations in which she is called upon to perform (Hall 1996: 14). According to Silverstein (2004: 622) "interaction indexically 'invokes' sociocultural conceptualizations—via emergent patternings of semiotic forms". K.'s projection into the future can be seen as an act of resisting these conceptualisations in the form of images projected on herself as a person as well as on the group she belongs to. The aforementioned negotiation puts K. in a relation with history, while she is claiming an identity that "marks the conjunction of [her] past with the social, cultural and economic relations [she] lives within" (Rutherford 1990: 19).

This act of agency is at the same time an act of belonging. Similar to all other participants of my study, K. does not possess a Greek passport, despite the fact that she has been living in the country for more than a decade. However, having spent years in Greece and having learned the language, she finds herself in a complex network of relationships, maintaining contact with her country of origin, being part of an ethnic and racial minority, being a woman, a migrant and a mother. She can, therefore, be described as being *here* and *there* and "straddling worlds"

(Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003), a description which would fit the majority of migrant populations. While indirectly claiming her right to vote, K. claims, at the same time, her right to belong where she resides and to be included in social processes. And while most groups of foreigners are deprived of civil rights, they are found to belong to many different objects of attachment (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten 2006: 7), one of them being the country where they reside. Through her wish that she could vote, K. expresses a strong connection with the *here* of communication. Moreover, by specifically referring to foreigners in Greece, she situates both herself and the group she belongs to in a context where coexistence of foreigners with locals is presupposed. This also enhances a sense of belonging in a wider group comprising all residents of Greece, regardless of their background.

Consequently, through the use of the pronoun *we* and its connection with an act of citizenship, K. claims for the group she belongs to a freedom they are deprived of. Hedetoff and Hjort (2002: x) point out that "today belonging constitutes a political and cultural field of global contestation, anywhere between ascriptions of belonging and self-constructed definitions of new spaces, freedom and identity". The use of the pronoun *we* in this context is directly related to the aforementioned freedom. By invoking a hypothetical world –what would have happened if foreigners had voted– K. does not only describe a fictional, hypothetical scenario. "Narratives are not innocent of social structure and social place, simultaneously reflecting and making sense of our social position in the order of things while never being merely representational of this order" (Anthias 2002: 500). Therefore, this hypothesis stands as a wish, an act of agency and the "projection of a future trajectory" (Yuval-Davis 2011: 14) at the same time.

An interesting example of identity ascription combined with an act of belonging through the use of the first person plural is found in the interview with A., who says:

(10)

Στην Κρήτη <u>έχουμε</u> φρέσκα πράγματα, <u>έχουμε</u> φρέσκα ρακί. (In Crete <u>we</u> have fresh things, <u>we</u> have fresh raki.(Greek for 'brandy'))

A., who has spent many years in Crete before moving to Athens and speaks Greek fluently, uses the first person plural when referring to the positive aspects of living on the island of Crete and more precisely states that life there guarantees access to fresh fruit and fresh brandy. Comparison of food quality is a recurrent pattern in studies with migrants. However, most of

the time, “fresh fruit is associated with country of origin, while the ‘host’ country is associated with the lack of fresh products” (Herbert et al 2008: 112). A. uses this image by turning it around and associates fresh food with the island of Crete, of which, incidentally, locals are very proud of, while comparing life on the island to life in Athens. Through this comparison, she includes herself in the group of people who are privileged through access to these products by using the first person plural. Moreover, she emulates the practice of Cretans, and other regional groups, when praising the products of their place of origin. In other words, A. opts to speak like a local engaging in an act of agency implying her inclusion in an in-group of Cretans.

While using the first person plural to express a strong commitment to the group she refers to, regardless of nationality, A. finds herself in a complicated network of belonging. And although most Greeks would question this identity claim, by using the first person plural she claims it for herself. Interestingly, this construction of identity takes place when A. interacts with the researcher, a Greek woman approximately her age, whose life trajectory differs radically from A.’s. As already mentioned in the analysis of excerpt (9), identity does not refer to a stable set of characteristics, defining the individuals in all contexts, but is rather fluid and therefore constructed during the course of interaction. The roles played by the participants of the interaction shape what is said and what remains unspoken. According to Cameron (2001: 146), “[h]owever conversational the tone of an interview or a focus group discussion, it is not just any encounter between just any two or more people, nor is it the case that just anything can be discussed in any way.” The characteristics of the interaction will be shaped by what participants take its purpose to be, how they interpret their roles and how they understand the norms for producing and interpreting talk. Hierarchies and power relations play a decisive role and so does what is presupposed a common ground.

The question whether A. would use *we* in a similar way when interacting with members of her community remains in the hypothetical realm. However, I would assume that this would not be the case. Moreover, the hypothetical self-representation as partly Cretan while interacting with members of her community would serve a different interactional goal compared to the self-representation analysed so far. In the beginning of the interview, the researcher stated that she knows the island of Crete quite well, as she spent her summer vacations there as a child, not far away from where A. was living and working. Therefore, interviewer and interviewee are found to have something in common. This knowledge could have influenced A.’s perspective. Through claiming parts of Cretan identity for herself, she brings to the foreground something she shares with the researcher, while claiming at the same time her right to belong

to the island more than the researcher does, to have stronger roots, as the researcher was there in the role of a child spending summer vacations accompanied by her parents, while she was a grown woman, working, having relationships, building a life. It is, in other words, an example of identity construction based on the assumed projections of the other on oneself. According to Bakhtin "to be, means to be for the other and through him, for oneself. (…) I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other; finding the other in me in mutual reflection and perception" (1984: 287). In this example the other, the researcher, influences the construction of the self of the interviewee through a complex network of power relations and acts of belonging, given a degree of shared experience.

When interacting with the researcher, A. has already moved to Athens. The use of first person plural in combination with the vocabulary she uses when she refers to Crete reflect part of her personal history and her trajectory as a migrant. It stands for the strong connections she has formed and can be seen as proof of integration. By projecting this image of herself, A. claims her identity through discourse, as "[w]e become who we are through discourse and social interaction, at the same time providing evidence of previous patterns of formative discursive social interaction" (Scollon and Scollon 2001: 539). Her words not only include her in a group but at the same time they reflect her personal trajectory. The argument that A. uses first person plural to claim Cretan identity is reinforced when combined with the analysis of the registers she draws on. Overall, her vocabulary includes many words and expressions typical of those who live in Crete. A. has incorporated these expressions into her personal vocabulary, claiming participation through language use. A characteristic example is the repeated use of the word *Eglezika* to refer to the English language, a word used either by older people or by those living in rural areas. Moreover, when describing her culinary preferences she says: *ξέρω να φτιάξω χοχλιούς, μπάμιες, και ξέρω να το τρώω (I know how to cook chochlious ((Cretan word for 'snails')), ochre, and I know how to eat them),* referring to typical Cretan food. At another point, when speaking about a party she held with her partner, she says: *το ακούσαμε στο σπίτι και χορέψαμε όπα (we listened to it at home and we danced opa ((a word used to express having fun while dancing))*. All aforementioned examples bear witness to the fact that A. has lived and worked in Crete for a number of years and had a relationship with a Greek man whom she almost married. These social interactions have shaped her identity and are projected into her discourse when interacting with a Greek woman.

In the aforementioned example, the clash between the identity the speaker claims for herself as sharing parts of Cretan identity and the image largely projected on foreigners as not

belonging to Greece due to lack of a common ancestry, creates an interesting asymmetry. A similar example can be found in the words of L., who includes herself in the group of people coming from Athens as opposed to those from Thessaloniki.

(11)

Εγώ ρωτάω τους Έλληνες από ποιο χωριό είσαι (.) θέλω να μάθω (.) και εάν μου λες είσαι από χωριό, εμ:: είσαι από την Θεσσαλονίκη, έχω μια φίλη μου που τη ρώτησα από πού είσαι, μου λέει είμαι από τη Θεσσαλονίκη, λέω ΦΥΓΕ γιατί εσείς τώρα είσαστε μετανάστες εδώ ((γέλιο)), θα παίρνεις/παίρνετε τη δουλειά μας, να γυρίσεις ΠΑΛΙ στην πατρίδα σου ((γέλιο)) και γέλαγε (.) ναι, γιατί ΕΜΕΙΣ είμαστε ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΙ, εσύ είσαι από τη Θεσσαλονίκη, να φύγεις ΑΜΕΣΩΣ.

(*I ask Greeks what village are you from (.) I want to know (.) if you say that you come from a village, hm:: you are from Thessaloniki, I have a friend who I asked where are you from, she says I am from Thessaloniki, I say GO because now you are migrants here ((laughing)), you will be taking our jobs, go back AGAIN to your country ((laughing)) and she was laughing (.) yes, because WE come from ATHENS, you are from Thessaloniki, you should leave IMMEDIATELY.)*

In this excerpt, use of first person plural is followed by a comparison. *We* come from Athens while *you* are from Thessaloniki. What starts as a description of the place one comes from, is then associated with the right of each group to live and work in Athens. In this excerpt first person plural is paired with the local adverb *here*. Linking a group of people to a place is a common discursive practice. By specifying place and time, the group the speaker refers to is clearly defined (Pavlidou 2008: 380), while at the same time boundaries from other groups, not belonging to this place, are created. L. uses space in order to clarify who *we* are as well as who *they* are. Thessaloniki, the other city, is repeated three times, while Athens is linked not only to *us* but also to the adverb *here*. According to the Pavlidou's analysis, linking the first person plural to the adverb *here* stresses the fact that those present in the interaction are part of the same group. This comparison of *us* and *them* is not devoid of judgement. Through stating the differences in origin, moral boundaries are created and maintained, with *us* bearing positive characteristics and *them* standing for difference, perhaps even a possible threat. In her statement, L. reproduces the kind of racist views she has suffered from in a playful way while recounting a dialogue between herself and a Greek friend of hers.

A large body of research has focused on public and private discourse and racism. As direct racism is no longer widely acceptable in Western societies, denial of prejudice has become one of the pervasive patterns of contemporary race discourse (Van Dijk 1992). So called "new racism" (Barker 1981) has taken over and different discursive devices and repertoires are used by majority group members in order to justify negative evaluations of out-groups, with the speakers still being positioned as decent, moral citizens while expressing negative views against minority groups. In other words, positive self-representation is maintained while the 'unsayable' is said (Augustinos 2010). By using these mechanisms, majority members signal out members of minority groups. Among other discursive means used to achieve the aforementioned in- and out-group polarisation, pronouns are often used, as they establish a clear contrast between the two groups, *us* and *them* (van Dijk, 2000). Following this line of thought, the use of *us* and *them* during interaction is not innocent of power, as it reflects stances, expectations and boundaries. *We* are usually a set of people who are bona fide members of a community and *they* are another set of people who are "unknown, suspect interlopers" (Lo, 2016). In Lo's study on the use of pronouns, dismissive reference to *these people* and *them* was found to position White speakers as morally superior to Asian Americans. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions with *us* being paired with positive characteristics while *they* are usually seen not only as different but at the same time as inferior in some way.

Similar to all other participants of my study, L. has been exposed to different forms of racism. Due to the fact that she holds the position of president of the United African Women's Organisation in Greece,[72] she has had additional contact with interlocutors from different backgrounds who have tried to achieve different goals while interacting with her, as for example journalists, politicians, activists, lawyers. However, her role as president of the organisation has not protected her from the everyday acts of racism that all members of visible minorities are confronted with. Consequently, and similar to other participants, L. has been exposed to direct racism as well as to the so-called "new(s) racism" (Van Dijk 2000: 34), according to which "minorities are not biologically inferior, but different. They have a different culture, although in many respects there are 'deficiencies' (…) 'pathologies' that need to be corrected". This kind of racism is predominantly discursive.

Interestingly, when constructing her own identity, L. decides to reproduce incidents of direct racism, the form no longer used by those who describe themselves as democrats. Her

[72] L. has not only agreed to openly stating her identity, she has insisted in me referring to her role as the president of the UAWO in my research.

words do not reflect subtle racism but a direct form, which invaded the Greek public discourse in the last decade. The interview with L. was conducted in 2014. In Greece, the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn entered parliament in 2012. At the same time, racist violence had become an everyday phenomenon, tolerated by authorities, and mainstreamed in official political and media discourse. Being confronted with anti-migrant rhetoric had, by then, become part of the everyday life of foreigners, especially those belonging to visible minorities. Far-right ideology had also entered public discourse. In their article, Triandafyllidou and Kouki (2014) focus on this brand of racism, its naturalisation and the discursive devices used by speakers in order to present racist views as unproblematic and acceptable. L. uses one of these discursive strategies adopted by widespread anti-migrant discourse. She divides the population into *us* and *them* and links every group to a specific origin. According to her argument, the members of each group have the right to work only in the area they come from. Mobility is not accepted and those who are not from Athens should go back to their cities. There is an obvious analogy to discourses according to which migrants should stay in their countries of origin or go back if they have already come to Greece, as they are responsible for the unemployment of a part of the Greek population.

The reproduction of this stereotype, the use of groups and subgroups, the inclusion of the speaker in one of them, the focus on binary distinctions, the overall structuring of her argument can be analysed as a form of resistance on behalf of the speaker. L. turns the brand of racism she has experienced towards a Greek person and puts herself on the side of the oppressor in a playful way, while reproducing one of the basic assumptions of contemporary nation-states, according to which cultural, social and linguistic mixtures between minorities/immigrants and the majority are to be avoided and homogenization is a permanent and persistent goal (Archakis 2018: 1). In this excerpt, L. shows how absurd racism can be and, at the same time, she claims for herself the position of a local. By pairing this argument with deep knowledge of Greek society and its norms, reflected in her first utterance, where she reproduces a question often asked in Greece, namely where your village is, she positions herself in a complex network of knowledge, relationships and attachments to different places. In this excerpt, L. claims Greekness not only by using the first person plural when referring to those who reside in Athens but also through the presentation of herself as a person who knows, shares and reproduces common discursive cultural practices, while at the same time resisting the ascription of racist views as well as the homogenising pressures exerted on her by incorporating them into her own discourse.

To conclude, while the first part of this chapter presented a homogenous picture, with participants using first person plural to include themselves in the group of people with common origin while presenting their actions as typical for this group, the image is different in this part. When claiming citizenship and belonging, the participants included themselves in different groups and first person plural was used for a variety of referents, reflecting the fact that African migrant women in Athens are not a homogenous group and do not ascribe themselves the same identity characteristics, neither do they participate in the same communities of practice. Interestingly, those who speak Greek well and communicate with the researcher in Greek, used first person plural to present themselves as members of subgroups of Greeks, those living in Crete and Athens. Language competence, paired with use of first person plural can, therefore, be seen as an indicator of belonging and sharing aspects of Greek identity.

4.4.3. Shared negative experiences and use of *we*

Apart from the examples mentioned so far on the use of first person plural to present personal choices as typical of a group and to claim knowledge and citizenship, the participants of my study often used first person plural when they referred to negative experiences, especially experiences of exclusion and racism. These experiences took place while the women were interacting either with people they knew, as for example their neighbours, or with strangers, on public transportation, on the street etc. Other experiences include unjust treatment by state institutions, hospitals and/or people working in offices. Concerning racism, one can distinguish between three different types: individual, institutional and cultural racism. While individual racism, based on skin colour, refers to "the belief that black people (…) are inferior to whites because of physical traits (…) which are determinants of social behaviour and of moral and intellectual qualities, and (…) that this inferiority is a legitimate basis for that group's inferior social treatment" (Jones 1998: 417), institutional racism refers to the ways in which "racist beliefs or values have been built into the operations of social institutions in such a way as to discriminate against, control and oppress various minority groups" (McConnachie, Hollingsworth and Pettman 1988). Cultural racism, finally, is defined as "the individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one race's cultural heritage over that of another race" (Jones 1998: 15). Cultural racism is pervasive in its influence, affecting all aspects of life (Stephenson 2004: 100).

In all settings analysed in this section, whether they had to face individual, institutional and/or cultural racism, participants in my study used first person plural in order to include themselves in a group of people who are discriminated against. In other words, in their recollections and representations of what had happened, they had not been targeted as an individual but as part of a group. This decision to present themselves as part of a collective can be analysed as a mechanism, a strategy the women use in order to protect themselves against the aggressiveness they perceive; to alleviate the negative experience by discursively diffusing it within a group and (discursively) sharing it with others. Racism has been identified as a major stress factor for migrants and has been associated with negative effects on their health and quality of life (e.g. Clark et al. 1999; Harrell 2000). Consequently, coping mechanisms have been found to play an important role in mediating the aforementioned stress (Datta et al. 2007). Social support and religiosity have been identified as prime coping strategies used by migrants of colour (Shorter-Gooden 2004: 407). Moreover, there has been a distinction between (a) active coping—aggressive efforts to change something; (b) avoidance coping -wishful thinking and efforts to escape or avoid the problem; and (c) minimizing the situation -efforts to detach oneself from the situation (Shorter-Gooden 2004: 408). Apart from the aforementioned strategies, the so-called "person-group discrimination discrepancy phenomenon" (Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam and Lalonde 1990) has been identified as an additional coping mechanism often used by migrants who receive discriminatory treatment. According to this strategy, migrants tend to distance themselves from the groups who are subject to racism in order to protect themselves from being perceived as victims. However, the examples analysed in this chapter do not align with the aforementioned findings, as the participants directly addressed the racism they had experienced and included themselves in a group of people receiving similar treatment.

In the first example, O. describes an argument with her neighbour and reconstructs their dialogue:

(12)

The next day another one, the neighbour came up ask me who is knocking on these door I say ti ((Greek for 'what')) door, nobody is knocking on the door (.) the woman shout and shout she said that she is going to tell the landlord we are going to pack out from this place (.) I asked her if we pack out >ok you want me and my children to go and stay in the platia< ((Greek for 'square')) she said yes, after all people are staying there that

was his English (.) she's from BULGARIA, she speaks English, she is from BULGARIA, I am from NIGERIA, >she's foreigner I'm a foreigner< because she speak English and Greek. So she say that >after all people that are sleeping in the platia< ((Greek for 'square')), did they have two head? I look at her, I ask her do you have a child? (.) She sai:iid (.) never mind. I said ok, no problem, I heard you, you can go (.) She said that she is >going to call dikigoro ((Greek for 'lawyer')) for u:::s, lawyer for u:::s<, that we are going to pack out after all we, we Africans we are supposed to live in ipogio ((Greek for 'basement')), something like that, we are not supposed to live UP, all the AFRICANS are living in ipogio ((Greek for 'basement')) I said I ask her what does it mean if Africa live in upstairs, what is the meaning of that. She said that because we are slave. (9) I said it's ok. (xxx) Today the landlord of that woman has chased her out of the house (.) and we are still living here, now it is six years we are living here, ALL the neighbourhood here our friend.

In this example, O. reconstructs the words of her neighbour and reproduces the racist views the latter expressed during an argument which started with the neighbour complaining that O.'s children were making noise. In this setting, O. uses the pronoun *we* in conjunction with her origin, Africa, and includes herself in the group of people coming from this continent. She continues by reproducing the view of her neighbour, according to which she is supposed to live in the basement because that is what all Africans do, only to confront her with a question, asking why this is the case. The neighbour answers that O. belongs to a group of people who are slaves. O. reproduces these views by using the first person plural, *we* are slaves. This direct attack on behalf of the neighbour, who expresses extreme racist views, is reproduced by O. during her interaction with the researcher. By using the first person plural when reciting the words of the neighbour, O. includes herself in a group of people with similar characteristics who are and/or would all be victims of this kind of racism. Therefore, she is not attacked as a person, but rather as a member of a group she belongs to.

The argument ends with a direct attack on the part of the neighbour, who says that the group O. belongs to consists of slaves. This kind of overt racism in not accepted by the majority of the population and is clearly against the views of the researcher. By reproducing this statement, O. could aim at ridiculing her neighbour. *We* are slaves, however *I* do not live in the basement. This analysis is corroborated by the closing sentence, with O. saying that the woman has left her apartment, because her landlord has chased her away, implying that she was unable to pay the rent, while the one who was supposed to live in the basement, to lack any rights

because of her status as a slave, is still living in the building (and not in the basement, at that). It is, in other words, the bad one who had to leave. By adding that her neighbour had to leave, O. presents her as weak, in the end. On the macro-level unjust behaviour ends with a form of justice.

When reproducing the words of her neighbour, O. reorganises her experience while recounting it to the researcher. During this process of reorganisation, the personal pronoun *we* serves various purposes. Apart from its referential use, through which O. is included in the group the neighbour refers to, it also serves as an argument during O.'s interaction with the researcher, as a "means of establishing a discursive carrier of perspective" (Bredel 2002: 175). The speaker reorganises her experience for herself and presents this organisation of the world to her interlocutor through someone else's words: the racist neighbour. Her decision to reproduce this incident establishes a perspective on her life and stresses the difficulties she has to cope with as member of a certain group, as well as her reaction to the aforementioned circumstances. Through the latter, she presents herself as a person who stays calm even when confronted with unjust behaviour. The end of the story serves as a form of justice, as O. and her family are still living in their apartment while the other person was forced to leave.

A similar example is found in the words of H. who refers to racist views expressed in the form of cultural racism:

(13)

Μόνο άμα έχεις διαβατήριό μας είναι πρόβλημα. ΑΜΑΝ όπου πηγαίνει με το διαβατήριό μας, γι' αυτό δεν θέλουμε τα παιδιά μας να ζήσουνε αυτή τη ζωή που ζήσαμε εμείς. Άμα έχεις διαβατήριο από όπως μας έχουνε βαφτίσει τρίτο χώρα είσαι (.) καμία φορά βλέπεις τον εαυτό σου πρέπει να φορέσεις να φοράς το πώς το λένε πανοπλία (.) υπομονή γιατί όπου πηγαίνεις εσύ έχεις special routinisation. Σου κάνει να λέω εγώ τι είμαι; τι είμαι;

(If you have our passport it is a problem. OH wherever you go with our passport, that is why we do not want our children to live the life we lived. If you have a passport from like they have named us third country (.) you sometimes see yourself you have to wear, how is it called, an armour of patience (.) because everywhere you go you have special routinisation. It makes you say, what am I? What am I?)

In this example H. associates herself with a group of people who share negative experiences on the basis of their passport. They have named *us* a third country, she says, and therefore if you

come from this country, Sierra Leone, you have to be very patient, as your passport is worth less than other passports. In this excerpt, Sierra Leone stands for all other third [world] countries, as H. calls them. Through the process of belonging to a group and sharing negative experiences with its members, H. becomes stronger. She is not alone in facing racism and difficulties, which have to do not only with the people who have passports issued by her country of origin but also with passport holders from many other countries. Therefore, *we* here simultaneously constructs two intersecting groups. Interestingly, H. uses the word armour, the same word Greene (1994) and Bell and Nkomo (1998) have used to talk about "the so-called armour that African American girls and women are socialized to wear—a strategy for self-protection and psychological resistance that provides a way to diminish the threat of racism and sexism" (in Shorter-Gooden 2004: 410). According to H., this armour is something African women in Greece have to wear as well, in order to cope with racism due to them coming from an African country and therefore not possessing one of the prestigious passports.

In this excerpt, H. shifts between use of second person singular and first person plural while recounting an inner dialogue. One of the functions of the inner dialogue is to help the speaker set up a new self-image in response to a disturbing experience (Bredel 2002). This seems to be the case in this excerpt, with *you* functioning as a "virtual reification of the self which was previously confronted with upsetting events" (Bredel 2002: 171). By using the second person singular, the speaker distances herself from herself discursively, keeping unpleasant experiences at a distance while still being able to deal with them. Moreover, through the use of a *you-form*, which tends to include the hearer, his/her participation in the events is evoked. By pairing second person singular *you* with the collective perspective of first person plural *we*, the speaker shifts the perspective from a personal experience to a collective one.

A similar view on the value of passports paired with use of first person plural pronoun to refer to the difficulties the women face as a result of belonging to a certain group, is expressed by L. who says:

(14)

Από τη Σιέρα Λεόνε αυτό το διαβατήριο που έχω όπου πάω θα με πιάσουνε. Μία γυναίκα που είναι από την Αφρική δεν είναι ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ να κυκλοφορεί πουθενά. Σου ζητάνε τα ΠΑΝΤΑ. Παντού. Σου ζητάνε τα πάντα, δεν μπορείς να κυκλοφορείς να πας στην Αγγλία όπως για παράδειγμα μία Ελληνίδα μπορεί να πάει ΧΩΡΙΣ ΒΙΖΑ (.) κατάλαβες. Εμείς παρόλο που είμαστε αποικία του:: Άγγλους αγγλική αποικία δεν μπορώ να πάω το

διαβατήριο Σιέρα Λεόνε. ΓΙΑΤΙ θέλουμε την υπηκοότητα ρε παιδί μου;, για να είμαι ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ να κινήσω ΟΠΟΥ θέλω.

(From Sierra Leone this passport I have wherever I go they will catch me. A woman who is from Africa is not FREE to move anywhere. They ask you for EVERYTHING. Everywhere. They ask you for everything, you cannot move go to England like for example a Greek woman can go WITHOUT A VISA. We, despite the fact that we were British a:: British colony, I cannot go my passport Sierra Leone. THAT is why we want citizenship you know?, to be FREE to move WHEREVER I want.)

In this excerpt L. refers to institutional racism. The fact that she needs a visa to visit England, although her country of origin, Sierra Leone, used to be a British colony, while a Greek woman can travel easily, without any constraints, is perceived as unjust. In this comparison L. is not alone. She explicitly uses the pronoun *we* in Greek, a zero-subject language, to stress the fact that the group she belongs to faces collective injustice. The comparison is formulated on the basis of *us* versus *them*, with *us* being the people coming from Sierra Leone and a Greek woman standing for *them*. L. continues by directly claiming citizenship, her right to a Greek passport, which she associates with freedom of mobility, so she can go wherever she wants, as she says. In this example, the pronoun *we* is associated with a group of people who have suffered multiple injustice, first having been colonised and then deprived of a passport which would give them the possibility to travel. By including herself in this group, L. brings up her claim for Greek citizenship, a topic she has often discussed with the researcher, as they have been going through the bureaucratic prerequisites in order for L. to apply.

At another point during the same interview, L. says:

(15)

Θα πεθάνω κάποτε (.) κάνω αγώνα για να αφήσω το κόσμος πίσω μου (.) κάποια θα πάρουν, θα συνεχίζουν (.) το κατάλαβες; (...) εγώ θα ήθελα (.) να έχουμε ένα ΧΩΡΟ, γραφείο, να μην έχουμε οικονομικό πρόβλημα να πληρώσουμε το νοίκι μας και τα αυτά να κάνουμε πράγματα, θα έκανα πολλά πράγματα παιδί μου, έχω πολλά στο μυαλό μου που θέλω να δώσω αλλά δεν έχουμε λεφτά (...) δεν είδες τη φτώχεια που ζήσουμε; αλλά τι να κάνουμε έτσι είναι. Δεν θα αφήνει θα αγωνιστώ η ζωή θέλει αγώνα.

(Someday I will die (.) I am struggling to leave something behind (.) someone will take it, continue with it (.) you understand? (…) I would like us (.) to have a SPACE, office, not to have financial problems to pay our rent and these things to do things, I would do many things my child, I have much in my head I want to give but <u>we</u> don't have money (…) didn't you see how poor <u>we</u> live? But what can we do that's how it is. I will not give up I will struggle in life you have to struggle.)

In this example, L. speaks about the financial difficulties the United African Women Organization (UAWO) faces and continues by referring to the hardship they all face. L. does not specify the exact referent of the first person plural pronoun; she could be referring to African migrants on the whole as well as (African) migrant women living in Athens, migrants from her country of origin and/or the other members of the UAWO. However, regardless of the exact characteristics of the bigger group, L. opts for first person plural *we* and therefore constructs a collectivity with admittedly vague reference when describing the financial hardship she faces; it could be her family as well as other people sharing her status as an immigrant African woman in Athens.

To sum up, the women used the pronoun *we* when they referred to difficult situations, hard living conditions and racism. In all examples analysed so far, sharing these difficulties as members of a group empowers the speakers. At the same time, by including themselves in larger groups, as for example the group of migrants coming from Africa and/or their respective countries of origin, they attribute the difficulties they face to their origin and do not seem to question whether they, personally, could do something to change the situation. Personal responsibility is, in other words, not brought to the foreground. Being a female migrant from an African country means being excluded, poor and subject to racism. Moreover, being marginalised as a group brings to the foreground the fact that the members of the group face injustice. By claiming their right to belong to a group, the women claim their identity as migrants of colour who are marginalised because of their origin and face hardship due to the racism they are confronted with.

Another example of institutional racism can be found in O.'s narrative who recounts her experiences in the maternal wards of two hospitals, Alexandra and Elena.

(16)

In Alexandra where they put <u>we</u> Blacks ((whispering)) >although I'm not black I'm chocolate< where they put <u>us</u> <u>we</u> African they put <u>us</u> with GUPSY in Alexandra (.) maybe in a room you might 14-15 maybe 20 it's very big hall but in Elenas perfect room ((daydreaming tone)), three in a room, or two (.) we are three (.) TWO two two two (.) this they don't put <u>us</u> with Gypsy people because Gypsy they are very dirty. (…) But Elenas they don't do it like that (…) Elenas is very good.

The healthcare experiences of migrants have been the focus of various studies and maternal healthcare experiences have been given attention from different perspectives. The above statement is part of O.'s description of her experiences of giving birth to her two children in two different hospitals in Athens. These two experiences are recounted as differing radically. While *Elena* is described as being a good hospital, where she was treated nicely, her experience in *Alexandra* is described negatively, mainly because she had to share a room with many *Gypsy* women. By saying that they put Black women together with Gypsies and using the first person plural to include herself in a group of women who suffer from this practice, O. presents herself as part of a group of women who experienced the same situation when they gave birth in this hospital. It was not a coincidence, she did not have to share the room with a large number of Gypsy women because she was unlucky. This experience can be attributed to the colour of her skin. It is, in other words, a racist practice of the hospital. While putting herself on the side of the oppressed, the ones who experience racism due to their origin, O. at the same time expresses racist views herself, as she implies that being put in the same room with Gypsy women is discriminatory treatment. Gypsies, in general, are seen as inferior by many participants of my study and African women are insulted when the Greek state associates them with this group, which belies their keen understanding of local social hierarchies and, at the same time, their reactions to institutionalized local racist practices through a brand of racism of their own, indicating their willingness to claim a more advantageous status for themselves. This seems to be the case in this example as well. O. continues by claiming that gypsies are dirty, therefore providing an explanation for the reasons she does not want to share a room with them. In this sentence, O. is describing her experience of racism as a victim and a member of a group of people receiving similar treatment, while at the same time she is being racist herself towards another group of women. Oppressed and oppressor are, in other words, found in the same person.

Moreover, this excerpt is an example of identity ascription and (lacking) self-identification. In the beginning of the excerpt, O. seems reluctant to include herself in the group of Black women, as she specifies that she is not *black*, but *chocolate*. Therefore, the first time *black* is used, it does not serve the purpose of group membership. However, the hospital treats her as Black and shortly after having mentioned this category without including herself in it, she continues by using the pronoun *we* to include herself in the group of Black women, who are all treated in a discriminatory way. In this example, identity attribution by an institution, the hospital, is stronger than the participant's self-identification as not being black but *chocolate*. These differences are ignored by the institution. O. accepts that she belongs to the group of Blacks, although she does not identify with it, as she is not able to impose her view. The subgroups and the importance of exact differences in skin colour, expressed in the narratives of many women, are ignored by the Greek state as well as most Greeks, who tend to perceive Africans as a homogenous group and describe them as simply Black. Self-identification is, in other words, not a defining factor, as the category black is projected on every non-white person coming from Africa.

All aforementioned examples of participants describing incidents of racist behaviours they have experienced and including themselves in the group of the oppressed by using the pronoun *we*, can be analysed as instances of deviation from the legitimising expectations of the majority. By overtly mentioning racism and exclusion, the women stress their collective negative experiences. Similar to the conclusions of Archakis (2018) concerning the self-representations of Albanian students, the participants of my study chose to construct hybrid identities that are not aligned with the stereotypical categorical assumptions of inferiority and submissiveness, but identities that are built on a resisting "counter-gaze that turns the discriminatory look (...) back to itself" (Bhabha 1994/2004: 67 in Archakis 2018). By overtly mentioning the racist experiences they have suffered and including themselves in the group of people who have been victims of similar treatment, the women present themselves as reluctant to overlook these negative aspects of their lives. On the contrary, they construct a hybrid identity while interacting with the researcher and focus on discriminatory treatment, overtly reproducing aggressive attacks and/or subtle racism. Through the reproduction of these experiences, the participants claim the role of "subjects of their history and experience" (ibid. 255), presenting themselves as reluctant to overlook the racism they have been subjected to while, at the same time, coping with painful experiences by including themselves in the collective first person plural *we*.

4.4.4. Positive characteristics of *we*

The focus of this section lies in the analysis of examples where the women used the collective pronoun *we* in order to present themselves as part of a group with positive characteristics. Contrary to the examples analysed in previous sections, where, while speaking about the difficulties they face in Greece and their experiences of racism, they included themselves in the large group of Africans and/or people with whom they share the same country of origin, when attributing positive characteristics to the group they belong to, the women referred almost exclusively to their countries of origin and/or their own ethnic groups. *We* is, in other words, paired with a positive image when the women refer to the smaller groups of people with whom they share the same country of origin and/or ethnic background. Both subgroups, country of origin and ethnic background, remain hidden when migrants of colour interact with the Greek population, as most of the times they are assigned the homogenising identity of being African and/or Black. Moreover, these subgroups might be of little relevance to the new social setting the migrants find themselves in. I will first analyse examples where the women referred to themselves as part of a group sharing the same country of origin and will then move on to the use of *we* when they included themselves in the group of people with whom they share the same ethnic background. In all examples, both groups were attributed positive characteristics and the women claimed inclusion in the group by using the pronoun *we*.

Positive cultural practices of their countries of origin are a major motivation for claiming shared identity. In the following example, G. speaks about her negative experiences in Greece, where she has faced racism and exclusion and concludes by saying that there is a big difference between these experiences of hers and what is typical for her country of origin:

(17)

G: It [racism] is everywhere it is everywhere but sometimes (.) maybe inside the trolei ((Greek for 'trolley bus')) they have two chairs (.) if you sit first >nobody will sit by your side< (.) rarely maybe some people would like to sit >when they see you are Black they will go< as if you are (.) >another type of human being something like that< (…) but I don't mind (…)

R: Have people told you something?

G: No (.) no (.) never ((whispering)) (.) I know <u>we</u> used to hear, <u>we</u> used to discuss among <u>us</u> that there are people that are (.) that are (.) not that good (xxx) but one thing

I like in my own town we >welcome visitors more than ourselves that is our culture< I mean it this one is not joke because I remember very close to our house (.) when I was small (.) our FIRST harvest, my mum used to go to farm (.) we have orange >we have different types of fruits< vegetables, the FIRST HARVEST >when you harvest like corn< the first one very close to our house we have small clinic (…) all the nurses there my mother used to give them small small portions of fruits and vegetables. I say hey I have harvested my first harvest that is the way we welcome visitors (.) that is our culture. THAT first harvest, we don't play with it, yes we give to them. (…) Show them that you are welcoming them to your own village (.) but here (.) anyway here some people are also good.

In this excerpt G. uses the pronoun *we* with shifting referents. In the first utterance (I know *we* used to hear, *we* used to discuss among *us*) she refers to a group of women who have experienced racism in Athens and have been talking to each other about what was happening to them. It is unclear whether these women share the same country of origin or whether they are all African migrants living in Athens and coming from different countries. The gendered identity of the pronoun is inferred from the familiarity of the tone as well as the content of the utterance. The members of the collective G. refers to discuss with each other about what happens to them. As G. is a Nigerian Igbo who came to Greece as a married woman, she is not expected to have close contact and long discussions about what bothers her with men, except for her husband. Consequently, in the beginning *we* refers to other women from her community, with whom she shares bonds and interacts on a daily basis.

After having described a racist practice that the first collective often experiences on public transportation, G. continues by introducing to the discussion a second group, the people with whom she shares the same country of origin and more specifically the ones coming from her home town. G. uses the pronoun *we* to include herself in this group, as well. By stressing that she belongs to a group of people who are hospitable and generous, she underlines the difference between what she is experiencing now - as an individual but also as a member of a collective: i.e. people not sitting next to her in buses because she is black - and what she has experienced as a child: her mother sharing their food with visitors and foreigners living and working in their village.

In this excerpt, G. repeats *it is our culture* twice, presenting an image that differs radically from what she experiences as a foreigner, a visitor, the one who does not belong to the place

where she lives. This statement stands in line with the findings of other researchers who have interviewed migrant Black women living outside Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the findings of a study with Ghanaian participants living in London, for example, the narratives of the participants were replete with statements that juxtaposed Ghana and Britain and were thought to be a way of expressing the interviewees' deep dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their lives in London (Gardner 2000). This seems to be a recurrent pattern in many studies. In G.'s words, a racist practice she is confronted with is followed by a positive image of her home town, with people sharing what they possess, despite the hardship they face. This pattern of comparing country of origin with country of residence in order to stress the positive characteristics of the former, can be attributed to "the contradictions and ambivalence which is at the crux of the migrant experience" (Herbert et al. 2008: 112), shared by many participants of my study.

Another comparison is found in K.'s narrative, who juxtaposes her country of origin not with Greece but with another African country.

(18)

One thing I love in my country <u>we</u> love foreigners we don't hurt them like Nigerians. You see the Lebanese that are living in Ghana (...) they are very OK there, they are respected (.) If I Ghana will fight with Lebanese the police will catch me and they will say he is a foreigner, you want to destroy the country name, you understand? <u>We</u> always look at our own country name (.) not to be racist to foreigners because <u>we</u> believe that the foreigner will always (xxx) your country if it is good name it come from foreigner, if it is bad name it come from foreigner (.) the name of a country come from foreigner.

According to K., Ghanaians welcome foreigners, as they know that afterwards the foreigners will speak about their country and they do not wish them to speak badly about it. This positive treatment of foreigners is motivated by the will of Ghanaians to protect the reputation of their country abroad. When speaking about this cultural practice, K. uses the pronoun *we* and includes herself in the group of people behaving in a similar way. This attitude is in contrast with the experiences of many Ghanaians living in Greece, including K. herself. However, in this excerpt she compares this Ghanaian cultural practice not with Greece but with another African country, Nigeria. Otherness is constructed in comparison with someone who is, at least in Greece, perceived as similar to the speaker. By stressing a positive cultural practice of her country of origin, which differs from what she has experienced in Greece as well as from what

is typical for another African country, Nigeria, K. stresses her belonging to a group of people whose collective identity is defined by hospitality, while at the same time drawing boundaries between herself and people she is perceived as being similar with in her everyday life. Through this sentence, she claims difference from both other Africans and Greeks –as well as cultural superiority– by stressing a positive trait of Ghanaians.

The comparison of Ghana, her country of origin, with Nigeria continues throughout the interview and is motivated by K.'s intention to criticise the cultural practices of Nigerians and at the same time to stress the positive characteristics of her country of origin. In the following excerpt she describes Nigerian children by saying:

(19)

They do everything they want they get pregnant they smoke weed. The mother work all day. We don't let them do that.

By criticising Nigerian children, K. distances herself from the women who raise them, their Nigerian mothers. In this example, *we* is used to include K. in the group of Ghanaian mothers who raise obedient children, as opposed to *them*, Nigerians, who raise their children badly and end up with children who are not well-behaved. By distancing herself from another African national group, K. does not present Africans or African mothers as homogeneous and does not wish her interlocutor to do so, as this would result in her attributing the negative characteristics of Nigerian mothers to the group K. belongs to, and consequently to herself as a mother, as well. By opting for this comparison, K. decides to distance herself from a group she is perceived as being similar with in the context of migration.

Being perceived as a homogenous group because of their skin colour is a common experience among the Black population of Europe and the United States. However, not only the population of the country where they migrated perceives African migrants as a homogenous group. Many academic studies have ignored variations among the Black population as well, as their aim has been the comparison between their Black participants and their White counterparts (e.g. Harper, Carini, Bridges, and Hayek 2004). Within-group differences have often not been taken into consideration. Consequently, Celious and Oyserman (2001) have urged scholars to steer away from a homogenous examination of race and instead to consider a heterogeneous group perspective. Their model stresses the importance of recognising how within-group differences and distinctions among individuals of the same race influence daily interactions as

well as experiences with and perceptions of each other. In the past decade differences in socioeconomic status, physical characteristics (i.e. skin tone), and gender have been taken more often into consideration, in order to identify the ways Black persons experience their status as belonging to a racial minority.

The aforementioned homogenising tendency is found in the perception of the majority of the population of many countries, who treat Black migrants as a homogenous group and are not aware of the differences according to country of origin, socioeconomic status, geographic community in the country of origin (rural vs urban), ethnic community etc. Most Greeks align with this tendency and refer to all Black migrants living in Greece as Africans while not making any distinction between people coming from different countries of origin with different trajectories and radically different cultural backgrounds. Needless to say, the group of African migrants is not homogeneous and skin colour does neither create nor enhance homogeneity. However, the aforementioned differences are usually not perceived and stereotypical images of African identity are projected on all Black people living in Greece. Since they belong to a visibly recognisable group, the participants of my study are continuously confronted with this categorisation of themselves as primarily African. Stressing the positive characteristics of their country of origin, especially in comparison with other African countries, can be seen as a form of resistance against these homogenising practices.

While in the examples analysed so far the women used the pronoun *we* to include themselves in the group of people with whom they share the same country of origin, first person plural was also used when my participants referred to their ethnic groups. As already mentioned in section 3.3, the participants come from countries whose population is made up of different ethnic groups. Ethnicity applies to a group of persons who accept and define themselves by a consciousness of common descent or origin, shared historical memories and connections (Chazan et al. 1988). Diversity can be found on all levels: cultural, historical, and linguistic. This diversity is a defining factor of my participants' identity and homogenising them abroad ignores the characteristics of each ethnic group. In the following part I will analyse some examples of inclusion into an ethnic group through the use of *we* and look into the factors motivating this inclusion.

A major motivation for the use of *we* when referring to an ethnic group was the creation of a positive image compared to other groups who are different and therefore in some way inferior. When speaking about beauty and the fact that her mother was very beautiful when she

was young, K. attributes this characteristic to her mother's light skin complexion. After describing her on the whole, she concludes by saying:

(20) *North εμείς δεν είναι τόσο μαύροι (We in the North are not that black).*

According to K., there is a difference in appearance if one compares the population of the north of Ghana to those coming from the south. Contrary to the perception of most Greeks, K. sees clear differences in skin tone and associates them with degrees of beauty. Later in the same interview, she makes fun of her husband by saying that *he is black*. Finally, when I visited her in the hospital after she gave birth to her daughter, I commented on the baby being beautiful. K. did not disagree, however, she stressed that the baby was very black, like her father, not like herself. K.'s husband comes from the south of Ghana and belongs to another ethnic group. K. associates darker skin tone with this group and judges them as being less beautiful compared to the ones from the north, where she comes from. *We* is used to include herself in the group with positive characteristics. In this excerpt K. does not refer explicitly to ethnicity, however geographical differences are associated with differences in ethnic background and would be understood as such among Ghanaians.

During the same interview, K. associates positive characteristics in behaviour with her ethnic group and again includes herself in it by saying:

(21)

Ποιος παιδιά είναι πολύ ευγενικά είναι οι Fanti και εμείς, north. (The children who are very polite are the Fanti and us, in the north.)

The above-mentioned example adds positive characteristics in behaviour to the ones in appearance, already mentioned in example (20). K. includes herself in the group of Ghanaians coming from the north of the country by using *we* and ascribes to herself, as a mother, the positive characteristics of the group she belongs to, through the presentation of the positive characteristics of the children they raise.

Association with an ethnic group and comparison with another group which belongs to the same country of origin, is found in the narratives of many women. S., who comes from the East of Nigeria, from the side of her father, and the West of the country, from the side of her mother, associates both ethnic groups she belongs to with positive characteristics, which are stressed through the comparison with other ethnic groups of Nigerians. When speaking about prostitution, for example, S. says:

(22)

>Nigeria is very big so we have different tribes there is one we call Benin they like to do prostitution< (.) that is their own way of surviving but <u>WE</u> from the EAST from the WEST <u>we</u> don't like it so <u>we</u> have to work hard so those ones they work in the ba:aar ((pejorative tone)) they just do striptea:aase (.) they find Greek men Albanian men they speak Greek FAST, more than <u>us</u> (...) TWO YEARS (xxx) so THOSE ONES they speak Greek very well.

In this excerpt, S. associates prostitution with an ethnic community, the Nigerian women coming from Benin. Moreover, she claims that prostitution is a cultural practice, something these women choose to do, as they do not like hard work. The Nigerian women with different ethnic backgrounds, however, do not share this practice and do not work in bars. Moreover, S. associates their fluency in Greek with their line of business and lifestyle. By describing prostitution as a choice, S. not only distances herself from the women who work as prostitutes, but at the same time she shows no solidarity with them, as they chose their way. Further, S. continues by saying:

(23) *<u>We</u> don't speak with these women.*

By including herself in the group of women who do not even speak to the ones working as prostitutes, S. draws a clear line between the two groups, denying any kind of communication. Her eagerness to make the boundaries that clear could be motivated by various factors. As already mentioned, most Greeks see Africans as a homogeneous group and do not make any distinction between countries of origin and ethnic communities. When speaking about prostitution, another woman, coming from Sierra Leone, said that all African women faced racism and embarrassing comments during the time when numerous African women were working as prostitutes in the streets of Athens.

(24)

I: Τελευταία όταν ήταν οι κοπέλες στο δρόμο ξέρεις πολλά κοπέλα κάποια στιγμή ήταν στην Ομόνοια: που κάνει στο δρόμο (.) θυμάσαι τι ήταν η Αθήνα κάποτε (.) 2-3 χρόνια, τώρα έχει φύγει οι πολλές.

R: Εννοείς αυτές που ήταν [στο δρόμο;

I: [Στο δρόμο στο δρόμο αυτές που ήταν στο δρόμο που ήταν στην Αφρική (.) από τότε Ω:::: τι πά::θαμε:: εμείς που δεν είμαστε έτσι.

R: Εννοείς οι κοπέλες που δούλευαν στο δρόμο; Που ήταν πόρνες;

I: Ναι ναι αλλά δεν ξέρεις ποιος δεν είναι ποιος ποιος είναι (.) θα φωνάξει, θα βρίζει.

R: Ποιος;

I: ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΣ δεν ξέρεις

R: Τι σου έλεγε;

I: Τα ίδια λέξη, πουτά:να, ναι δεν ξέρεις οι άλλες που αυτή είναι οι δουλειές τους κι εγώ δεν ντυθώ να προκαλεί τέτοια αλλά ΦΟΒΑΜΑΙ (.) α:: >εγώ κλαίω πολλές φορές στο δρόμο πώς να εξηγήσει κύριε εγώ είμαι απ' τη δουλειά μου δεν είμαι εκεί δεν είμαι ΕΤΣΙ< πού θα πας κάπου θέλεις να μιλάς (.) ναι από τότε (.) αλλά: πωπωπω τι πάθαμε μ' αυτά αλλά τώρα (.) είναι πολύ καλύτερα (.) πωπω έκανε δύσκολο για μας, πωπω και οι δουλειές ήταν πάρα πολύ δύσκολο να παίρνει κοπέλες τότε, όταν ήταν πολλά εδώ, ου::: (xxx) >ήταν πάρα πολύ δύσκολο εγώ δεν ήθελα αυτά< (.) ντράπηκα πάρα πολύ αλλά τι να κάνω.

(I: In the past, when the girls were on the street, you know many girls at some point were in Omonia: who do on the street (.) do you remember what Athens used to be (.) 2-3 years, now most have left.

R: Do you mean the ones who were [on the street?

I: [On the street, on the street, the ones who they were Africa (.) since then OH:::: what happe::ned to us we who are not like that.

R: Do you mean the girls who worked on the street? Who were prostitutes?

I: Yes yes, but you don't know who is not who who is (.) they will shout, they will swear.

R: Who?

I: UNKNOWN, you don't know.

R: What did they tell you?

I: The same word, who:re, you don't know the others who it is not their job and I don't dress to provoke but I am AFRAID, ah:: >I cry often on the street how to explain sir

I'm coming from my work I'm not there I am not like THAT< wherever you go you want to speak (.) yes since then (.) bu::t oh what happened to us with these things but now (.) it is much better (.)oh it was hard for us, oh and the jobs were very hard for the girls to get back then, when they were many here, oh:::: (xxx) >it was very hard, I did not want that< (.) I was very ashamed but what could I do.)

According to I. the ones insulting African women on the street did not make the distinction between those who worked as prostitutes and those who didn't. The women were treated as a group due to their skin colour, and faced racism due to their belonging to a group. Consequently, S.'s readiness (excerpt 22) to stress the differences between the various groups of Africans living in Athens could be motivated by her need to protect herself from the stereotypes projected on her. Bad experiences and fear of racism could serve as explanatory factors.

In excerpt (22) S. associates prostitution with language competence (*they find Greek men Albanian men they speak Greek FAST, more than us (...) TWO YEARS (xxx) so THOSE ONES they speak Greek very well*). Although the topic is not language, S. drifts to it by saying that Benin women speak Greek because they associate with men, Greek or Albanian, while the other women, with different ethnic backgrounds, the ones she includes herself in by using *we*, do not learn the language, because they work hard. This association is motivated by various interrelated factors. S., who has lived in Greece for many years and is raising her two children on her own, as her husband is in jail for a minor offence, does not speak Greek. However, she is aware of the fact that the researcher teaches language courses to African migrant women. In the beginning, when they first got acquainted, S. approached her by saying that she was interested in taking part in the lessons. However, she never came to class, claiming that she was lacking time. The researcher never commented on her not showing up, however she did encourage her to attend in the future. Consequently, S. knows that her interlocutor would be pleased if she would learn the language. However, her living conditions have not given her the chance to do so. In order to explain her lacking linguistic abilities, she opts for an ideologisation of language competence, assigning a moral component to the knowledge of the language.

In this example, linguistic features can be seen as reflecting and expressing broader cultural images of people and activities. According to Gal and Irvine (1995: 973), ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as evidence for what the speakers "believe to be systematic behavioural, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups

indexed". In this context, indexical relationships become the ground on which other sign relationships are built. This seems to be the case in S.'s narrative as well. By associating knowledge of Greek with prostitution and lacking linguistic skills with hard work, S. uses language competence as an index while at the same time she protects herself against possible criticism from the part of the researcher as a Greek language teacher.

During the same interview, S. distances herself on various occasions from other Nigerian women with different ethnic backgrounds. In the following excerpt she associates education with cultural practices and attributes a lack of education to a certain ethnic background by saying:

(25)

Most of the Igbos, they don't go to school. In the West, my father's side, we believe in education.

Through the use of the verb *believe*, education becomes a moral obligation and by using the pronoun *we*, S. includes herself in the group of people who respect this obligation, albeit identifying as an Igbo as well.

At another point during the same interview, she criticises the fact that there are children in Nigeria used as slaves only to associate this practice with the group of people coming from the East of the country.

(26) *That's how they do in the eastern part of Nigeria, we don't do that.*

In this example, ethnic origin is held accountable for enslaving children and she herself has nothing to do with this practice, as she does not belong to the ethnic group associated with it. According to her description, the group she includes herself in does not bear any similarities with the ones she distances herself from.

On the whole, S. mentions numerous negative characteristics of other Nigerians, only to distance herself from them by stressing that these practices are typical of ethnic backgrounds other than her own. The use of *we* to include herself in her ethnic group, which differs radically from the ones associated with the aforementioned negative characteristics, can be attributed to her desire to protect her identity in a context where being African is associated with being marginalised and facing racism. Her negative experiences over the past years can be held responsible for her will to criticise the other ethnic communities of Nigeria and to present

herself as part of a group with positive characteristics in the context of migration. On the other hand, it may also be seen as an attempt to claim status where it is obviously in short supply.

In another example, M. includes herself in the group of people coming from her country of origin only to specify that she belongs to a subgroup, the ethnic community of the Igbo.

(27)

You know, Nigeria is a big nation, Igbo, let's say Igbo, not to talk of the whole of Nigeria, very big, we have culture, we have the way we cook, the way we greet, the way we dance, the way we put on clothes, so many cultures. Everyday life it's similar [to Greece]. Let me say everyday activity (.) greeting is not like here, like here you can say gia::: ((Greek for 'hi:::')), geia sou ((Greek for 'hey you')), in Igbo you cannot say it like here, you have to say good morning sir, like kalimera sas ((Greek for 'good morning sir')), you say good morning sir. (...) Here you can only say gia::: ((Greek for 'hi:::')), big man, small man, doesn't matter for them.

This description, which, at first glance, might seem neutral, aims not only at giving the researcher information about M.'s country of origin but also at creating an image which differs from the one most people have about African countries as being dangerous and poor, and of people being poorly dressed and uneducated. M. sees herself as part of an ethnic group with rich culture and is proud of her origin. While referring to all different domains of life where the Igbo possess rich tradition, she uses *we* to include herself in this group. This description of one's own culture and its values stands in line with other researchers' findings, according to which their participants used similar practices in order to construct boundaries between themselves and others (i.e. Lamont 2000). Keeping in mind the status of M. in Greece, a migrant without legal papers and a housewife, dependent on her husband, in comparison to her status in her country of origin, an educated and independent woman, who proudly states that she had a car when she lived in Nigeria, this boundary is created in order to enhance her self-esteem and stress her dignity while she interacts with a Greek interlocutor.

The image of herself belonging to an ethnic group with a rich culture is in stark contrast with the stereotypical images of Africa, usually associating Sub-Saharan Africa with famine, poverty, war, high HIV rates and barefoot children. Although these images have been strongly criticised in the past decade, they still dominate Western media and have therefore become part of the collective imagery about Africa. In this excerpt, M. distances herself from this

stereotypical imagery and presents herself as part of a collective with rich traditions and positive characteristics. The group she belongs to is often deprived of voice and described by others, through their perception of them. By describing the traditions and verbal decorum of the group she belongs to, M. is "giving testimony on behalf of others who need to be defined as specifically as possible in order to give them a voice" (Van de Mieroop 2014: 328). This motivation accounts for most of the examples where the women distance themselves from members of other ethnic background in this chapter. Overt mentioning of ethnic group membership and combination of this group with positive characteristics creates boundaries in a space where these are not perceived and their importance is ignored if not denied. Therefore, the participants construct their identity by distancing themselves from groups they are perceived as being similar to, giving themselves and the groups they identify with a voice they are usually deprived of.

Interestingly, with the exception of example (26), in all other examples analysed the women present themselves as part of their ethnic communities when comparing this group to other ethnic communities living in Greece. This decision to present an image of themselves as being different from the ones they are perceived as similar to, can be attributed to their desire to give a voice to groups which are homogenised in the context of migration. While claiming their positive characteristics, at the same time the women claim their right to present their cultural backgrounds as valuable and important. This desire is strengthened by the pressures of racism and exclusion, both of which are part of the everyday experiences of my participants.

4.4.5. Negative characteristics of *we*

However, the women do not refer to their countries of origin only in contexts where they want to attribute positive characteristics to them. On the contrary, they often speak negatively about their compatriots, as for example S., who says:

(28) *We Nigerian, we do nothing for free, I paid.*

As already mentioned, S. is experiencing extreme hardship and had to work on an island in the summer, in order to earn money to sustain her family. When I asked her what she did with her two children during that time, she answered that she left them in Athens with another woman from Nigeria, a person she described as a *friend*. I commented by saying that I think it is nice this woman helped her out, only to get the answer that the woman did not help her out.

She had to pay her, she said, as *we Nigerians, we do nothing for free*. By referring to this negative characteristic of people from her country of origin, S. stresses that being part of the group of Nigerians in Athens does not imply any kind of social or moral support. Her identity as a single mother who copes on her own is foregrounded and the assumption of the researcher that other Nigerians might support her is proven not to correspond to reality. In this excerpt, identity is constructed in relation to the group the speaker claims to belong to by using the pronoun *we*. S. includes herself in the group of Nigerians, only to distance herself from them and stress its negative characteristics; other Nigerians do not support her at all, as it is a trait of Nigerians to *do nothing for free*. She creates a complicated image of herself as a person who is part of a network while at the same time she is left alone to face the difficulties she is confronted with.

A similar example of attribution of negative characteristics to the group the speaker belongs to, is found in the interview with F:

(29)

We Ghanaians, we are lazy, and if the men are not coming, they also do not allow the women to come.

The stereotype of people, and especially men, coming from African countries being lazy is reproduced by F. in order to explain the lacking linguistic competence of Ghanaians in the Greek language. In this excerpt, F. presents herself as part of a group which bears negative characteristics. Consequently, group membership should be held accountable for the fact that she does not speak Greek. Similar to other examples analysed in this chapter, country of origin serves as a form of protection. Lacking linguistic ability is not attributed to personal incompetence or seen as a failure, but is rather attributed to group membership. F. uses a typical stereotype projected on Africans, laziness, in order to account for her limited knowledge of the Greek language, only to continue that apart from laziness, male dominance is responsible for the fact that the women are not learning the language independently of the men.

A similar example is found in the interview with A.

(30)

R: Παρέα με άλλους; που έχουν παιδιά; ((Hanging out with others? who have kids?))

A: Δεν έχω. ((I don't have.))

R: Εκκλησία πας; ((Do you go to church?))

Α: Ναι, εκκλησία μας ντάξει πάω εκεί, είναι στην Ομόνοια, Πεντηκοστή, πήγα στην Κυριακή που πέρασε με τα παιδιά μου >πάω εκεί και κάνω την προσευχή μου δόξα σοι ο θεός κάνω αυτό που θέλω να κάνω και μετά πάω σπίτι< γιατί έχω μάθει μερικές πράγματα εδώ στην Ελλάδα <u>εμείς</u> που είμαστε από την Νιγηρία δεν <u>έχουμε</u> τόσο αγάπη που πρέπει να δείξουμε αυτούς που είναι από την Αφρική γυναίκες.

((A: Yes, ok, I go to our church, it is in Omonia, Pentecostan, I went last Sunday with my children >I go there I pray I praise the Lord I do what I want to do and then I go home< because I have learned some things in Greece <u>we</u> from Nigeria <u>we</u> don't have the love we should show to those who are from Africa the women.))

Similar to S., A. criticises the group she belongs to, namely Nigerian women, for lacking love and support for each other, but still uses the first person plural to present herself as part of this group. By criticising the group she belongs to, her personal achievements and the positive traits of her character are highlighted. A. is left alone to take care of her family and to provide them with everything they need. Interestingly, during the whole interview, A. never uses first person plural to include herself in a group of people coming from Africa, her country of origin and/or her ethnic group in order to associate them with positive characteristics. She only uses first person plural with a positive connotation when speaking about her family, her husband and herself, their activities, their common life. Apart from that, her trajectory is almost exclusively recounted in first person singular. This decision of hers can be attributed to her eagerness to present herself as a strong woman who copes on her own. On the whole, her story is structured as a heroic quest with the use of the first person singular creating the image of a character who is fighting on her own. All the credit for what she has managed to achieve has to be attributed to herself exclusively. Similar results are found in the literature concerning the way male speakers construct their identities in discourse. According to Coates (2003), in their narratives men construct themselves as achievement-oriented, competitive and unemotional. The image of the lone hero dominates their stories. Similarly, Georgakopoulou (2002: 94-96) claims that male speakers tend to present themselves as tough, strong and successful by picking certain subjects of discussion and avoiding others. A. seems to opt for what has been described as a typically male narrative when speaking about the way she has coped, on her own, without close friends, without any support, apart from her close family.

To conclude, if one compares the examples concerning inclusion in the groups of Africans and of people coming from the same country of origin with the ones concerning ethnic group membership, a clear difference arises. Inclusion into an ethnic group has in all cases been motivated by the intention of the women to present themselves as part of a group with positive characteristics. While they sometimes attributed negative characteristics to Africans and/or to people with whom they share the same country of origin, this does not seem to be the case vis-à-vis ethnic identity, which is always associated with positive characteristics. In other words, in some cases, the participants of my study do not wish to be included in the group of Africans and/or people coming from a certain African country, however they always wanted to be perceived as members of their ethnic groups, which bespeaks the privileged status of ethnic identity for purposes of self-identification. Nevertheless, this self-identification does not influence the way the women are perceived by others, as they are seen as part of their ethnic communities only by those who know the differences, those coming from the same country of origin or by other Africans. Moreover, the women know that the researcher cannot make these distinctions. Even if she is willing to understand them, she is not able to grasp what exactly they imply, as this would take acculturation in their own value system and presuppose knowledge that can hardly be gained unless someone has spent years in the communities they come from. By including themselves into their ethnic communities, the women try to compensate for this lacking knowledge on the part of their interlocutor, which stands for lacking knowledge on the part of the Greek population as a whole, tending to label them as African and projecting mostly stereotyped images of an undifferentiated “Africa” on them. It is, in other words, a process of claiming their own voice and their right to self-identification in the context of migration.

CHAPTER FIVE

FRAMEWORKS OF SPATIALIZATION

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, a grammatical feature, the use of personal pronouns, was analysed according to the interactional goals of the speakers, the different contexts of its use, its motivation, and the contribution of all aforementioned factors to identity construction. According to the results, claiming group membership through the personal pronoun *we* is motivated by various factors, reflecting and reproducing hierarchies and wider power relations, while positioning both interlocutors according to their assumptions about the other and their interactional goals. The same holds for the use of spatial deixis.

Cultural geography has long established a distinction between "space, a pre-existing grid of physical locations, and place, a specific location given meaning by people's practices, language, and beliefs" (Myers 2006: 323). According to this distinction, space is limited to a geographical point, which is easily described and defined on a map, while place is imbued with meaning by those taking part in communication. This distinction has influenced scholars working in various strands of linguistic research, ranging from studies on the use of local varieties and/or linguistic variation and its relation to identity and stance during communication (i.e. Johnstone 2004, 2007; Quist 2010; Boyd and Fraurud 2010) to the analysis of linguistic/semiotic landscapes (i.e. Gorter 2006; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Blommaert 2015; Canakis 2018b, 2019) and rather new intersectional approaches like geosemiotics, the "study of the meaning systems by which language is located in the material world" (Scollon and Scollon 2003: x). All aforementioned approaches interpret the relation between language and place through a more dynamic perspective, "moving from the assumption that place defines identity, to studies of the ways in which participants may make place relevant to their identities in situated interactions" (Myers 2006: 325).

In this context, it is important to stress the dialectic nature of the relationship between place and identity, as place identities are constructed by speakers in interaction, while being, at the same time, constitutive of the speakers' identities. This relationship between places and identities is neither solid nor fixed. It is a dynamic process which is constantly negotiated and (re)constructed "by the interaction of human agency, social structures and social practices"

(Torkington 2011: 4). The aforementioned structures and practices influence the creation and establishment of collective identities and shared social representations (van Dijk 2008b, 2009), which are both maintained and subject to change via repeated communication and negotiation through discursive practices (Koller 2008).[73] My analysis will make use of the notion of positioning as an approach to analysing identity work in conversation (Davies & Harré 1990; van Langenhove and Harré 1999), where participants take on roles through which they produce themselves as "social beings" (Bamberg 1997: 336), with a special focus on narrative positioning of migrants and its relation to dominant discourses (cf. Archakis 2018; Karachaliou et. al. 2018). As every act of positioning is related to broader ideologies and indexes socio-cultural values, macro-social factors will be taken into consideration as well (cf. Wodak 2008; Wodak and Meyer 2009), while always seeing the speakers as positioned by wider discourses and, at the same time, as individuals negotiating their position inside predefined hierarchical spaces.

In the process of migration, where space is not static and a person's belonging to a geographical point on the map changes over time, place attachments play an important role in sustaining individual and collective modes of identity (i.e. Jones and Krzyżanowski 2008; Morse and Mudgett 2017). Images of mobility, location, borderlands, exile and home (Blunt 2003: 75–76) have been found to permeate migrant narratives, with "displacement and mobility in time/space *constituting* the narrative action" (Baynham 2015: 123, emphasis in the original) instead of serving as the background of what is being said. As attachments to places that contribute to a sense of belonging are likely to differ radically in the highly mobile late modern world compared to what they were in the past (Savage et al. 2005: 1), migrant narratives constitute interesting sites of research concerning these multiple spatial attachments.

5.2. Indexicality, the linguistic representation of space, and identity

This chapter aims at relating the narrative use of space with identity construction. To this end, the analysis concentrates on two structures, the deictic *here* and the use of toponyms. Indexicality, which was found to influence the use of personal pronouns in chapter 4, plays a pivotal role in defining the ways space is used in interaction as well. Similar to pronouns, the

[73] Ideology is reflected not only in narratives but also in the linguistic landscape (i.e. Canakis 2018b on the linguistic landscape of Belgrade and the ways identitarian concerns are inscribed on the city's walls and Canakis 2019 on the linguistic landscape of Mytilene as an index of the city's social reality).

referential value of a place depends on its indexical value (Silverstein 1976). Spatial structures are, therefore, interesting examples of flexible, indexical categories. As they are related to "a field of potential meanings – an *indexical field*" (Eckert 2008: 454, emphasis in the original), their use can activate different ideological constructions, depending on the participants' identities and interactional goals. This flexibility in the manipulation of spatial reference makes spatial deixis an excellent example of how reconstruals are "always already immanent" (Silverstein 2003: 194), as new indexical values are added to an already existing indexical field, with indexical order being constitutive of the way macro-sociological orders are introduced as values into micro-structures of communication (Silverstein 2003). The resulting constellation of meanings, that are ideologically linked, can be described as an "embodiment of ideology in linguistic form" (Eckert 2008: 463).

By indexing certain geographical locations and speakers' relation to them (and through them to the rest of the world), indexical space becomes fundamental in identity construction. This function of spatialisation is striking in contexts of mobility, where space is viewed in relation to scaling processes,[74] since "movements across space involve movements across scales of social structure having indexical value and thus providing meaning to individual, situated acts" (Blommaert et al. 2005: 199–200). These movements and the consequent formation of multilingual, polycentric environments as well as the creation of transnational ties, result in the interaction of centres and peripheries with people claiming their belonging to places and/or interactionally distancing themselves from them (Blommaert et al. 2005: 201; Heller 2003; Vigouroux 2008). Linguistic practices and manipulation of space during discourse play an important role in maintaining this distinction while attaching the person either to centres or to peripheries.[75]

[74] According to Blommaert et al. (2005: 200), polycentric environments are characterised by the existence of different scales, understood as the "differences between the range and scope of meanings and meaningful social behavior, some of which are strictly local-situational, others being translocal (national, transnational, ethnic, political [. . .])". In a capitalist system, these scales differentiate places and label them as centres, semiperipheries and peripheries, based on economic criteria and the division of labor, with peripheries being dependent on centres. While this dependence is mainly of an economic nature, it has been argued that it extends to other domains, like language and culture, sustaining the association of the aforementioned immaterial goods with differential prestige and symbolic value (Blommaert et al. 2005: 201-202).

[75] This attachment is evident in the differential prestige attributed to accents and varieties of English, like for example US and Nigerian English, as well as in the manipulation of these accents and its relation to identity claims (i.e. Trudgill 1983 on British Pop-song pronunciation; Rampton 2006 on accent manipulation, identity and social class; Dong and Blommaert 2009 on accent and the construction of migrant identities in China).

The concept of home plays an important role in the context of mobility and migration, as home, and the related feeling of belonging, is bound up with specific geographical locations which are experienced through semiotic framing and are constructed discursively in various ways (Entrikin 1991; Johnstone 2004). Home is, in other words, not only a geographic location on the map, but at the same time a mental construction which is claimed in discourse. Viewing home as an affective construct related to feelings of security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility or hope (Hage 1997) gives migrants the chance to connect themselves to different homes in their narratives. By claiming spaces as their home(s), by referring to imagined homes and belongings and by making those places discursively present, interactants are able to construct certain forms of identities (Jaworksi and Thurlow 2010: 7). And as "migrant populations are likely to have different visions of space, politics and language than do nation-states, which can imagine mobile people only as problems, unless they assimilate" (Gal 2010: 43), the analysis of spatial deixis in migrant narratives becomes a valuable source of information on these differing perceptions and the connections formed by these populations when they (re)construct home, while connecting their past with their future and their countries of origin with their diaspora lives.[76]

5.3. Spatial deixis

Spatial deixis concerns reference to places whose location is specified either in relation to other objects or to fixed points of reference. This specification always takes place "relative to anchorage points in the speech event" (Levinson 1983: 79). In other words, when place deictics are used, such as in the case of the adverb *here*, the location of the speaker at the time of utterance defines the adverb's referent, which can be described as "the pragmatically given unit of space that includes the location of the speaker at the time of speaking" (Levinson 1983: 79). However, the image is much more complicated than it might at first appear, and spatial deictics vary in referential scope according to different yet interrelated factors. The proximal deictic term *here*, which refers to a location relative to the speaker, can be used to describe different referents vis-à-vis scale; "it can denote a point on the speaker's own body, the immediate space of utterance, the area, building, region, country, hemisphere in which the utterance occurs, or

[76] Everyday practices of home and belonging have been the focus of various studies dealing with migrant populations, mostly from a geographical and/or anthropological perspective (i.e. Binaisa 2013 on Ugandan migrants in the UK; Waite and Cook 2011 on Zimbabwean, Somali, Sudanese and Kenyan migrants in the UK; Datta 2016 on Polish immigrants in the UK; Zaphiriou-Zarifi 2007 on African migrant women in Greece).

indeed the entire earth" (Hanks 1999: 125). The default use of *here*, its reference to the speaker's location, can, therefore, be altered according to the speaker's intentions and their scope and/or perspective, enabling non-anaphoric, symbolic uses of deixis, connected to psychological rather than merely physical proximity and, indeed, to emotions (Levinson 1983: 81). Moreover, location should not be seen only physically, as a concrete place; a speaker's perspective can be fixed mentally as well (Yule 1996: 12), therefore making mental representations important in the analysis of space deixis. Consequently, it can be argued that spatial deictic expressions communicate more than what is said (Yule 1996: 16) and their analysis is, therefore, a rewarding field of research.

In this section, I focus on the use of *here* in the women's narratives. In the first place, *here* points to a place on a map, referring to the speaker's location at the moment of utterance (Heyd and Honkanen 2015: 18). However, as already mentioned, the narrative use of spatial deixis can be more complicated than the aforementioned specification of a certain geolocation. By using spatialization, speakers do not only put themselves (and others) on the map; they connect to a certain vision of space, relating either to an actual physical point or to a wider social perspective (Gal 2010: 44). In the setting of the interview, spatial deictics can either refer to the immediate surroundings of the speakers, or they can be located within the spatial context of the story a person narrates, foregrounding places which do not necessarily correspond to the speaker's present geolocation. By discursively activating these places and attributing them certain characteristics, the narrators can relate to them despite their physical distance. Moreover, they can fuse space and time and discursively align chronotopes, a concept used by Bakhtin (1981) to describe the inseparability of space and time in literary narratives, which has been applied to various other disciplines, including discourse analysis and oral narratives (i.e. Agha 2007; Dick 2010; Perrino 2015).[77]

The use of spatial deixis is very interesting in contexts of mobility, as speakers change physical location over time and are therefore expected to relate to different spaces at different time-frames. A characteristic example is the description of the border as a line, with migrants positioning themselves on either side of it by using the respective deictic expressions. These descriptions constitute positioning devices, while deictics shift according to the narrator's

[77] According to Bakhtin (1981), the story and the storytelling event belong to two distinct chronotopes. However, speakers might combine them by using different mechanisms and fuse past and present deixis in their narratives. More recently, Blommaert (2015) and Blommaert & De Fina (2017) have examined chronotopes in identity construction as "the space-time organization of who we are".

presentation of the self "which can either be identical to the story world character or be looking at the story world character from the here and now" (De Fina 2003a: 380–381). This kind of deictic switching can serve as a mirror for the interlocutors' affective stance, their ambivalence regarding their relation to space as well as their relation to their interlocutors (Haviland 2005). While narrating their experiences, speakers can align themselves either with their life before migration and with those they left behind, or with their new homes (and/or switch between the two) and connect them with certain images and feelings, "from nostalgia and feelings of (be)longing, to local pride and affiliation, and to disappointment and dissociation" (Heyd and Honkanen 2015: 15).

The focus of this section lies in the discursive use of the deictic *here* in the women's narratives as a strategy of meaning-making and at the same time as a means for claiming identities in interaction. Relation to place, affective stance and chronotope alignment will be taken into consideration in data analysis. I will first focus on the use of *here* to refer to places and then move on to its use in comparisons, as this pattern was recurrent in my data.

5.3.1. The deictic *here*

In the narratives of the participants the deictic *here* is used to refer to different geographical locations. The analysis of the data is structured alongside the patterns found in the narratives, which were grouped into similar categories. According to this content-grouping, the women use *here* to refer primarily to their current location, Greece. This use is firstly motivated by their very presence in the country and can be described as the default use of the deictic. However, its symbolic use in many excerpts makes the image more complicated, as the participants are found to attach certain emotions to the deictic and anchor themselves in space in order to express their belonging to their country of residence, which is directly connected to a certain form of identity. Moreover, *here* is used when the women connect their past and present lives, as in the course of recounting their journey from country of origin to new country of residence. In all aforementioned categories, the women show strong stances towards the places they relate to. The aim of analysis is to foreground the relation between these localities and the participants' identities. Examples where *here* is used to index something found in the immediate surroundings of the interview setting, such as something found in the room where the interview is taking place, are not included in the analysis of the data.

5.3.1.1. Spatial deixis and belonging

The majority of the uses of the deictic *here* are associated with Greece. This use of *here* can be described as a default one, as the narratives were collected in Greece, where the women resided at the time of the interview. However, analysis of the contexts of use and the associations made with place leads to the conclusion that the use of the deictic *here* is largely motivated by the participants' will to stress the bond between themselves and their country of residence. As the women belong to a visible minority, which is confronted with exclusion on a daily basis, their discursive claiming of belonging by deictically relating themselves to Greece, coupled with positive connotations, gives them the chance to project a positive image of themselves, as people who are not constantly on the move and in-between, an image often associated with migration (i.e. Anzaldúa 2002; De Fina 2016; Bhabha 1994), but as having arrived at their destination. Identification with place and positioning of themselves as part of Greece and Greek society are the main mechanisms activated through this use.

The most direct and open claim of belonging connected with spatial deixis is made by L., who says:

(1)

Εδώ είναι η χώρα μου, ναι, εδώ εδώ μου αγαπάνε πολύ κόσμος τόσο που δεν είχα στην πατρίδα μου, κατάλαβες; Εγώ έτσι (.) εγώ κατάφερα (.) να φύγω από κει κατάφερα (.) τι αγώνα έχω κάνει θα είχα πεθάνει τώρα.

(Here is my country, yes, here here people love me so much I didn't have in my country, you understand? Like that (.) I managed (.) to leave from there I managed (.) do you know how much I have fought I would be dead now.)

In this excerpt, L. claims for herself the right to not only live in Greece as a migrant; what she claims is her right to describe the country as her own by associating the deictic *here* with the possessive *my country*. L. has been in Greece for almost 30 years, is fluent in Greek and has a strong public presence as the president of the UAWO. Nevertheless, she does not possess Greek citizenship and is faced with racism and exclusion on a daily basis, as well as unemployment and hardship, especially since the beginning of the economic crisis. Despite these difficulties, she discursively relates to the country in a positive way. By combining the deictic *here* with the expression *my country* L. stands as an example of superdiversity, a migrant who claims for herself a hybrid identity as a black Greek woman. L.'s turn of phrase evokes the concept of

emotional citizenry, which exceeds the formally achieved fixed status of citizenship (Askins 2016), and gives the person the possibility to claim belonging to a place by relating to it through a positive emotional connection. Her sense of belonging is not based on papers and formal characteristics but on the love she receives in the country, relating the right to belong not to the so-called right of blood but to a person's position and social relationships at a given place. This act of belonging is stressed through the repetition of *here*, which appears three times in a single sentence, intensifying its discursive importance. Moreover, by stressing the difference between her position in Greece and the one in her country of origin, L. distances herself from what would have been her biography, if she had stayed in Sierra Leone, and claims a biography of choice, with herself in the role of a strong woman who has control over her life.

A similar example is found in K.'s narrative who partly claims Greece as her country as well, while answering the question whether she would consider moving to another European country:

(2)

In Greece here I know how to speak Greek, I can WORK and make my money I am not going to Germany >I'm not going I'm staying here <and I'll keeping praying for the Greeks. (xxx) Why:: I should come to Germany and start from class ONE? New life? No Greece I feel is part of my country in Greece here I know everywhere in Greece here (.) WHY::: I should go?

In this excerpt, K. associates Greece as *here* with a positive image of herself as established. This *here* is not an in-between space of liminality[78] with temporary and transitory character, characteristic of migrant experiences. It is, on the contrary, a stable and permanent choice. In her narrative she relates this choice with a positive self-image, as she has accomplished something important in this country, she has learned the language and is able to work. While the first use of *here* (*I'm staying here*) can be analysed as a default use of the deictic, as interviewer and interviewee share the same country of residence, the following uses (*Greece I*

[78] According to Turner (1969), liminality denotes the middle phase of a ritual process, that can be divided into three phases during which an individual undergoes a transition from one social status to another (like for example from being a boy to becoming a man or from being a girl to becoming a woman). During the middle phase, when individuals belong neither to the first nor to the second category, ambiguity is found and liminal characters can be described as being "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (Turner 1969: 96). This concept has been applied to migration, as migrant lives have been described as belonging to this liminal, in-between world, with migrants being neither members of their country of origin nor fully belonging to their new country of residence.

feel is part of my country in Greece here I know everywhere in Greece here) have a symbolic (indeed intensifying) value, connecting K. with the image of a person who possesses knowledge and lives in a place of choice. Similar to L., K. repeats the deictic *here*, stressing its importance and the pivotal role it plays in her life.

This positive image of Greece, expressed in the association of *here* with positive characteristics, is repeated a few minutes later, when K. refers to her plan to bring her sister to Greece:

(3)

I tell for my sister I say listen one day because I will see if I can bring her here. I say one day if you can come to Greece here you are free:::.

In this excerpt, K. connects her wish to bring her sister *here* with the freedom she will enjoy if she comes to Greece. This image of future freedom, coupled with the deictic *here*, underlines the difference from what her sister is experiencing in her present life in Ghana, the *there* which is not mentioned as it is presupposed in the discussion. In this context, it is important to note that K. is a victim of trafficking. She comes from the north of Ghana, was sold as a bride to a Ghanaian man working in a Greek ship and managed to escape when they arrived at a Greek port. Therefore, the adjective *free* and its relation to space does not only reflect the better future she wishes for her sister but also her own biography, as a woman who managed to change her fate and claim her freedom when she arrived in Greece. *Freedom* here is not only emotive but circumstantially objective. *Here* is therefore laden with positive affect not only based on what the country has to offer but also on what K., as a victim of trafficking, has experienced during the years of enslavement. In this excerpt, the first, default use of *here* (*I will see if I can bring her here*), which refers to K.'s current country of residence, is followed by a second use of the deictic (*you can come to Greece here*), which stresses emotions and personal biography and has, therefore, a symbolic value.

In the excerpts analysed so far, the women construct a sense of self and belonging indexed by the use of *here* and coupled with a positive affective stance. As narratives are stories about the self which are told many times and, through their (re)telling they create "unity, coherence and a stable and continuous sense of self across time and space" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 160), the women's discursive claiming of Greece as the country they belong to projects an image of themselves they are usually deprived of. In their narratives, they do not present themselves as passive victims but, on the contrary, as active agents, who are in control of their

lives and make decisions according to the circumstances they find themselves in. Migration to Greece is rated as a positive decision, on the whole, as the country is associated with positive characteristics. This presentation of the self is, in other words, an act of agency, through which the women claim power over their lives.

A similar example is found in the words of H., when recounting a dialogue with her daughter, who asked her why she was born in Greece instead of America:

(4)

Η: Η κόρη μου μικρή μου λέει μαμά:: γιατί ο θεός μου έστειλε να να γεννηθώ στην Ελλάδα ((γελάει)) δεν μου έβαλε να γεννηθώ στη πως έχει >έχει μανία με Καλιφόρνια< δεν ξέρω Αμερική να μεγαλώσει να είναι 16 χρονών να έχει οδήγηση αυτοκίνητο ((γελάει)) να κάνει το sweet 16 party ((γελάει πολύ)) κατάλαβες;

R: Κι εσύ τι λες;

Η: Λέω ρώτησε το θεό ((γελάει)). Μήπως έχεις μήπως έχεις κάτι να κάνεις εδώ γι' αυτό σε έβαλε εσύ εδώ μπορεί να είσαι από γονείς από Αφρική αλλά σε 'στειλε ΕΔΩ.

(H: My little daughter says mu::m why did God send me to to be born in Greece ((laughs)) he didn't put me to be born >she is obsessed with California< I don't know America to grow up to be 16 years old have a driving a car ((laughs)) and do the sweet 16 party ((laughs a lot)) you understand?

R: And what do you say?

H: I say ask God ((laughs)). Maybe you maybe you have something to do here that's why he put you here you might be from parents from Africa but he sent you HERE.)

In this dialogue, H. describes herself (and her husband) as coming from Africa, while her daughter was sent directly *here*, to Greece. This belonging of her daughter to Greece is discursively related to something she has to accomplish in the country. In her answer to her daughter's question, H. uses the deictic *here* three times, the last one emphatically stressed. While her daughter would like to have been born in America, H. thinks that she belongs to Greece. In order to corroborate her claim, she introduces God and some kind of mission, therefore relating her daughter's locality with a sort of moral order. These claims discursively construct her identity as a religious woman who follows, even unknowingly, God's plan. According to McAdams (1993: 5), "[i]dentity is a life story. A life story is a personal myth that

an individual begins working on in late adolescence and young adulthood in order to provide his or her life with a purpose". Based on this definition, the family's migration to Greece is incorporated into a life myth. It is not mere coincidence that brought H. and her family *here*; there is something they have to accomplish. Although H.'s claim of belonging is not as strong as L.'s (1) and K.'s (2), emotional citizenry plays a role in this excerpt as well, motivating the use of place in H.'s narrative.

In all examples analysed so far it is important not to forget that the participants are interacting with a Greek woman who belongs, without any doubt, to the country they discursively claim as theirs as well. Despite the fact that the researcher has always expressed positive feelings about migrants and has openly supported their claims to belong as well as their right to obtain Greek citizenship, the relation between interviewer and interviewee remains asymmetrical. "As the identities that speakers and audiences produce and reproduce crucially relate to the circumstances of production" (De Fina 2003b: 27), it might be the presence of the researcher which motivates, up to a certain extent, the projection of these forms of identities.

In the following excerpt, the topic changes, and O. recounts the problems she has had with a neighbour, only to come to the conclusion that she is still *here* while the other person was forced to leave the building:

(5)

The next day another one, the neighbour came up ask me who is knocking on these door I say ti ((Greek for 'what?')) door, nobody is knocking on the door (.) the woman shout and shout she said that she is going to tell the landlord we are going to pack out from this place (.) I asked her if we pack out >ok you want me and my children to go and stay in the platia< ((Greek for 'square')) she said yes, after all people are staying there that was his English (.) she's from BULGARIA, she speaks English, she is from BULGARIA, I am from NIGERIA, >she's foreigner I'm a foreigner< because she speak English and Greek. So she say that >after all people that are sleeping in the platia< ((Greek for 'square')), did they have two head? I look at her, I ask her do you have a child? (.) She sai:d (.) never mind. I said ok, no problem, I heard you, you can go (.) She said that she is >going to call dikigoro ((Greek for 'lawyer')) for u::s, lawyer for u::s<, that we are going to pack out after all we, we Africans we are supposed to live in ipogio ((Greek for 'basement')), something like that, we are not supposed to live UP, all the AFRICANS are living in ipogio ((Greek for 'basement')) I said I ask her what does it mean if Africa

live in upstairs, what is the meaning of that. She said that because we are slave. (9) I said it's ok. (xxx) Today the landlord of that woman has chased her out of the house (.) and we are still living here, now it is six years we are living here, ALL the neighbourhood here our friend.

In this excerpt, O. reproduces the racist views of her neighbour and concludes her story by stating that, unlike the other woman, who was forced by the landlord to leave, they are still living *here*. *Here* is used three times in the last sentence in order to stress the fact that her family has been living in the same building for six years and has created strong social bonds with the location. By concluding the narration of a racist experience involving another immigrant woman with a positive remark, O. presents herself as living a steady life, enjoying the support of a network of people and feeling at ease in her environment. Again, this image of the self does not align with the liminality projected on migrants and their everyday lives as lived in precarity and ambiguity (i.e. Butler 2009; Schierup and Jørgensen 2016). On the contrary, it reflects a positive image of the self, an accomplishment the speaker is proud of, and underscores it as an act of agency. Moreover, by referring to *here* in the coda of her story, O. follows the stages of a fully-formed narrative, as described by Labov (1972: 169), according to which the narrative "begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended as the focus of evaluation before the resolution, concludes with the resolution and returns the listener to the present time with the coda". In P.'s narrative, the final closure, the returning to the present, is coupled with the deictic *here*, anchoring herself and her family in space and closing her story off with an image of spatial stability.

Apart from relating their life in Greece with positive characteristics and explicitly associating the deictic *here* with images of home, the women claim their belonging to Greece by presenting themselves as part of Greek society through their knowledge of what is going on in the country. In the following excerpt A. answers a question on whether she watches TV:

(6)

Τηλεόραση βλέπω ειδήσεις >τι συμβαίνει εδώ στην Ελλάδα< και βλέπω BBC (.) τι συμβαίνει σε αλλού (.) και βλέπω συνήθως (.) τα περισσότερα::: ειδήσεις που βλέπω είναι >εδώ στην Ελλάδα<.

(TV I watch the news >what happens here in Greece< and I watch BBC (.) what happens elsewhere (.) usually I watch usually (.) the mo::st news I watch is >here in Greece<.)

A similar answer to the same question is given by I.:

(7)

Αυτά τα βλέπω παντού, όλες τους σταθμούς, το πρώτο ειδήσεις είναι Alpha, μετά (.) εγώ::: θα βλέπω τα: ξένα, κάθε μέρα εγώ θέλω να βλέπω ειδήσεις κάθε μέρα ΚΑΘΕ ΜΕΡΑ >να ξέρω τι συμβαίνει <u>εδώ</u>< (.) να ξέρω τι:: εγώ θέλω να ξέρω.

(I see these everywhere, all channels, the first is news at Alpha, then (.) I::: watch the:: foreign ones, every day I want to watch news every day EVERY DAY >to know what is going on <u>here</u>< (.) to know wha::t I want to know.)

Both women state that they follow Greek news on TV on a daily basis, because they want to know what is going on in the country. In both examples this priority is associated with the use of the adverb *here*. A. and I. present themselves as people who want to be informed and claim for themselves the image of active citizens. In this context, claiming knowledge can be interpreted as an act of belonging. A.'s and I.'s statement that they regularly follow Greek news, because they want to know what is going on *here*, in the country where they live, not in their country of origin, is opposed to the belief that migrants spend their lives in a world which is largely secluded and has only limited contact with the native population. The women claim their roles as active and well-informed agents by claiming knowledge, which is a prerequisite for being a good citizen in Western states, where knowledge and citizenship have been directly related to democracy (cf. Riesenberg 1992). This image of themselves as good citizens corroborates their claims of integration in their country of residence and at the same time it functions as a projection into the future, which is closely associated with their membership in an imagined community (cf. Anderson 1983; Norton and Toohey 2011). Finally, it stresses the image of an active female citizen, as they do not rely on their husbands or other male members of their communities and/or families, but are able to access the information they want on their own, primarily due to their good linguistic skills (cf. 6.3.3. excerpt (15), on the role of N. as a linguistic mediator).

In all examples analysed so far, the women use space in order to claim a certain position for themselves (and their families) in their country of residence. However, spatial deixis is not restricted to references to the participants' present lives; it is found to play an important role in the women's narratives of their route of migration as well. As deictic locations are specified "with respect to the location of a participant *at coding time*" (Levinson 1983: 85), when recounting their journeys, the women relate to space in retrospect. During this process they have

the opportunity to claim different identities, while reconstructing images of the self during their trajectory. The following two excerpts constitute examples of narrative socio-spatial fusion on the journey of migration.

(8)

E: I call back Africa, the man go and buy card for me, I called my da::d, I call Britain to tell them that I am <u>here</u> now >so everybody was very happy< (.) then then they said ah HOW are you going to move from <u>here</u> I said this is what I don't know. >I don't know what I am going to do::<.

After a long journey from Nigeria to Europe, having passed through several countries and experienced numerous difficulties, E. finds herself in Greece, although her original plan was to reach either Denmark or Britain, as she had relatives in these countries. However, border restrictions made the continuation of her journey from Bulgaria, the country she entered Europe from, impossible and she was forced to move to Greece and settle in the country, at least temporarily. In this excerpt she recounts her dialogue with her family in Nigeria and Britain, when she called to inform them about her whereabouts. When reproducing the reaction of her relatives, she fuses them into one single group, who are referred to as *they*.[79] After having informed them that she is *here now*, with the deictic referring to Greece, they asked her how she is going to continue her journey by saying *how are you going to move from here*. This indexical shift takes place as E. fuses her geolocation, Greece, with the words of her relatives, who are situated in other countries, be it Nigeria or Britain. By opting for *here* instead of *there*, E. performs a deictic transposition (cf. Haviland 1996) and ignores the recentring which would normally take place in direct quotation (cf. Hanks 1990). She therefore violates "[t]he displacement or alteration of the indexical ground of utterance" (Hanks 1990: 197) and favours the common ground between herself and her interlocutor, underscoring the relevance of the current moment. In her story, E. fuses two perspectives and creates a self which is anchored in two worlds. By introducing the deictic *here* in a story belonging to the past, she creates a continuity between her two selves, the one before migration, which is related to her country of

[79] As pronouns are deictics as well, the interpretation of *they* is dependent on its context of use. The unclarity found in this excerpt can be attributed to the fact that the pronoun's referent is not important in the course of the story and the speaker's argument would not be influenced should the referent shift from the relatives in Nigeria to the ones in Britain (cf. De Fina 2003a on ambiguous pronoun reference). This ambiguity in pronominal use stresses the role played by the narrator as the one who will eventually decide on the course of events. Moreover, it stresses the similarities between the two groups, which can be referred to with a single pronoun despite their geographical distance.

origin, and the present one, which lives in Greece. The 'there and then' of the utterance is, in other words, fused with the 'here and now' of communication with the researcher, contrary to what has been claimed for direct quotation, where all shifters must be canonically understood not in relation to the quoting utterance but to the quoted one (Jespersen as cited in Jakobson [1957] 1971). Identity construction and a continuity of the self can serve as explanatory factors for this shift.

Complex and subtle social meanings are indexed by the use of spatial deixis in the following excerpt as well, as M. describes how she came to Greece after meeting and marrying her husband in Nigeria:

(9)

R: Και ήρθες μαζί με τον άντρα σου; (And did you come together with your husband?)

M: Ehm, he was there before me, we got married in 2007 then he left because he was <u>here</u> before.

R: He came to marry you?

M. Yes he came (.) because he wanted a wife so he just came <u>down</u> to look for a wife and he met me in my working place (.) I was working before.

In this excerpt, the past and the present are fused in two instances. In the beginning, when answering the question whether she came to Greece together with her husband, M. adopts the perspective of her old self and refers to the country by using the adverb *there*. Similar to the previous example, where E. uses deictic transposition when reproducing her family's utterances, M. fuses past and present as well, transporting herself back to Nigeria and indexing space from this geolocation. Similar to the findings of Haviland (1996), whose migrant subject was found to align spatially to the ones left behind, M. positions herself in relation to those who are still in Nigeria and adopts their perspective of seeing Greece as *there*. The same applies to the use of *came down*, when M. says that her husband came to Nigeria to look for a wife. As *come* and *down* are shifters, acquiring meaning only in relation to context (Jespersen as cited in Jakobson [1957] 1971), the description of Greece and Nigeria in terms of *up* and *down*, respectively, is only meaningful if one relates to another center in the North as well. In this example, this center would be Greece. Moreover, in this example M. uses the verb *come*, a verb of motion with a deictic component, which signals "motion towards location, or addressee's location at either time of speaking, or reference time" (Levinson 1983: 84). This flexibility of

the verb *come* enables its use, coupled with the adverb *down*, to signal movement to Nigeria when recounting a story that took place in the past. Similar to E. in excerpt (8), in this example M. fuses time and space and creates a continuity between her past self before migration and her present life in Greece by aligning to different spaces and merging them in her narrative. This kind of space/time orientation should, however, not be interpreted solely as the background of the narrative. It is, on the contrary, constitutive of the story (Baynham 2015: 129), as it shapes the image the women project of themselves as belonging to multiple locations while stressing their multi-layered identities.

Apart from merging space and time and transposing the self into different locations at different times, spatial deixis can serve as a reflection, a comment of the women on the course of events during their journey of migration. In the following excerpts, *here* is used to refer to Greece as the end of the route by two women who experienced the journey in completely different ways.

(10)

M: When I came 2010, I came 2010 (.) precisely July 22nd 2010 I was here it was on a Friday, so after that I stayed e::h >three four months at home<

(11)

P: I didn't have another name, the problem was that (.) I was the owner of the document, I'm I'm refugee but these traffic people, when they bring you here, they cannot give you the paper because that time Nigeria passport was malakies ((Greek for 'bullshit')).

M. (10) came to Greece by plane, after having obtained a visa at the Greek embassy in Lagos in the process of family reunification, following her husband who was living in the country. She narrates her arrival in a very precise way, coupling the deictic *here* with an exact date and providing information even on the day of the week. This exact point in time serves as a mark, a new beginning of her life outside Nigeria. P., on the contrary, remains vague in her description. As she is a victim of trafficking, brought to Greece from Nigeria (although she was told she would be going to Germany) in order to work as a hairdresser, only to be forced to work as a prostitute, her route of migration is filled with insecurity and pain and the vague personal references (*these people*) can be seen as indirectly indexing the shady business they are into. In her narrative she refers to her traffickers as *these people* who bring you *here* and refuse to give you your legal documents. This vagueness is in line with the findings of a study

on narratives of border crossings (De Fina 2003a), where vagueness of orientation in the story-world was found to be combined with a loss of control and a consequent lack of agency by migrants who were left alone in the middle of nowhere by smugglers. Similar conclusions can be drawn concerning the use of spatial deixis by P., as *here* is coupled with vague reference to the people responsible for her experience as a victim of trafficking.

An interesting manipulation of space connected to identity and continuity in time is found in A.'s story, who answers a question on her arrival in Greece with a detailed description of her journey:

(12)

R: Πότε ήρθες; (When did you come?)

A: Το 2003. (2003)

R: Μόνη σου; (Alone?)

A: Ναι μόνη μου (.) ε μόνη μου και:: με ράμματα πάνω μου (.) γιατί είχα σημά:::δια με πόνο και (xxx) ήταν γεμάτο με πίκρα. Γιατί δεν είχα βοήθεια, με τόσο εντάξει να πώς να φύγω, γιατί όταν συμβαίνει αυτό το ατύχημα >μέσα στην εκκλησία< είχε μία κυρία, εκεί τη γνώρισα, αυτές ήθελαν ταξιδέψουνε (.) είχανε καράβι (.) αυτές μου είπανε θα πάνε στο Turkey με το καράβι (...) αυτοί μου πήγαν εκεί και μου άφησανε και μου είπανε:: θα βρω κάποιος που πάει >εδώ στην Ελλάδα να με βοηθήσει< και εκεί βρήκα μία καλό παιδί και ταξιδέψαμε με το καράβι και έφτασα έφτασα εδώ στην Ελλάδα. Όταν έφτασα εδώ ντάξει τα σημάδια δεν είχανε ακόμα έτρεξαν αίμα, και στο ΠΟΔΙ μου το έχω ακόμα, και έτρε: και τότε έτρεξαν αίμα και δεν είχα κανένα:: (.) να πάω ούτε έχω μία που θα μείνω στο σπί:τι τους >τέτοια βοήθεια δεν είχα< και από κει και πέρα και πήγα στο αλλοδαπών εκεί που δίνουνε τη ροζ κά:ρτα.

(A: Yes alone (.) eh alone a::nd with stitches on me (.) because I had sca:::rs with pain and (xxx) was full of bitterness. Because I didn't have help, with this ok how should I leave, because when this accident >in the church< happens there was one lady, I met her there, they wanted to travel (.) they had ship (.) they told me they would go to Turkey with the ship (...) they took me there and left me and to::ld me I will I find someone who goes >here in Greece to help me< and there I found a good kid and we traveled by boat and I arrived I arrived here in Greece. When I arrived here ok the scars had not yet there was blood coming out, and on my LEG I still have it, and then blood was co: it

was coming out and I had nobody: (.) to go I did not have someone to stay at their hou:se >this kind of help I didn't have< and then I went to immigration service where they give the pink ca:rd.)

In this excerpt, A. describes how she fled from Nigeria after an attack of Boko Haram[80] on the Christians living in the North of the country and arrived in Greece after a long journey crossing several countries. From the first *there*, which refers to the church she found herself in, after an accident she does not elaborate on, she moved to the second *there*, Turkey, where she found someone to help her come to Greece, the *here* in her story. In this excerpt, spatial deixis follows the narrator's real movements through space and time. A. uses the adverb *here* two times to refer to her arrival in Greece and then mentions the scars on her body. These scars are found in the beginning of the narrative as well, when A. recounts how painful it was to leave her country being injured and alone. Through these scars, mentioned in the past and as well as the present, and their association both with the *here* of her life in Greece as well as the *there* of her narrated experiences, A. merges chronotopes.

As already mentioned, chronotopes were introduced by Bakhtin (1981) who worked on literary narratives, in order to describe the inseparability of space and time.[81] According to his approach, the chronotope provides the necessary spatiotemporal coordinates which function as a link between the narrative content and the social, cultural, and historical context of the narrating action. This notion was redefined by Silverstein (2005: 6) who describes the chronotope as "the temporally (hence, chrono-) and spatially (hence, -tope) particular envelope in the narrated universe of social space-time in which and through which, in emplotment, narrative characters move". According to this line of thought, the story and the storytelling event belong to two distinct chronotopes and narrators use spatiotemporal deictic expressions to frame events in the past as belonging to a distinct universe of narrated actions, which should

[80] Boko Haram is a jihadist organization based in northeastern Nigeria. The organization was founded in 2002 and initially it focused on opposing Western education. Since 2009, when Boko Haram launched military operations to create an Islamic state, it has killed tens of thousands and displaced 2.3 million from their homes, at least 250.000 of which have left Nigeria and fled into neighbouring countries. In 2014 Boko Haram killed over 6.600. The same year it declared a caliphate in areas it controlled. The group drew international condemnation by abducting more than 276 schoolgirls from Chibok town, saying it would treat them as slaves and marry them off - a reference to an ancient Islamic belief that women captured in conflict are considered war booty.

[81] "The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative. [...] Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence" (Bakhtin 1981: 434).

be distinguished from the time of the storytelling event (Perrino 2015: 140). However, narratives are filled with examples of fusions between the two worlds and it would be fruitful to connect any discussion of identity with the different chronotopes the subjects find themselves in, as these configurations of space and time influence contexts in ways that are nonrandom and compelling (Blommaert and De Fina 2017: 1). This perspective is most relevant in contexts of mobility and superdiversity. The use of chronotopes in migrant narratives is, therefore, an important analytical tool, as they can reveal a lot about the ways the "most minute aspects of identity practices [are] operating as indexicals for large-scale 'structuring' characteristics of social practice" (Blommaert and De Fina 2017: 2). Chronotopic displacements and cross-chronotope alignments as well as transposition of selves across zones of cultural spacetime (Agha 2007: 324) are only some of the mechanisms migrants can use in their narratives, resulting in what Silverstein (2005: 17–18) has called the "coeval alignment", an overlapping of space and time, a convergence of past and present in the event of narration.

In this excerpt, A. makes use of the aforementioned possibility to fuse space and time and stresses the continuity of the self in the different locations. After stating that upon her arrival *here* she still had the scars that were already on her body when she was in Nigeria, the *there* of her story, and stressing that there was still blood coming out of these wounds, she continues by creating a second bridge, bringing together herself at the time of arrival in Greece with the time of the narrative event. She states that when she arrived *here* there was still blood coming from the scars, only to continue by saying that she still has the scars, and specifies the exact location on her body: her leg. *There* and *here*, *then* and *now* are connected by the repeated mention of these scars. As spatiotemporal practices are not mere descriptions of places and events but should rather be seen as sites of struggle (Harvey 1989), this focus on pain as well as the continuity in time and the connection of this image with the self in different chronotopes is directly related to A.'s claim of her status in Greece as a refugee in need of protection as well as to her self-image: a strong woman who manages to survive (despite still visible wounds).

A similar fusion of chronotopes is found in the following two excerpts, with participants creating a continuity between their life in their country of origin and their presence in Greece through religion.

(13)

L: Μέχρι να αρχίζω σχολείο τότε έμαθα ότι Ελλάδα είναι πράγματι υπάρχει η Ελλάδα (.) τα διαβάζαμε στο Ευαγγέλιο τότε μικροί ήμασταν μικρά παιδί. (xxx) Τότε ήμουν στην ε::

στο δημοτικό (.) >δεν ήξερα πού είναι η Ελλάδα< αν υπάρχει ή αν δεν υπάρχει (.) και είπα στην (.) και μας έλεγαν για:: (.) ήμουνα στο δημοτικό (.) που μας διαβάζανε το Ευαγγέλιο διάφοροι χριστιανοί, μιλούσαν για την Αθήνα υπάρχει Αθήνα μέσα που ήρθε ο Πέτρος ο άγιο Πέτρος που ήρθε εδώ για να διδάσκει ο κόσμος για χριστιανοί, επήγε στην κάπου στην Ακρόπολης, που έλεγαν ότι εμ:: τι λένε ότι για ποιον θεό μιλάει τώρα (.) άγνωστο θεό >εμείς δεν το ξέρουμε το πρόσωπο< τότε δεν υπήρχε χριστιανοί εδώ στην εμ: Ελλάδα, έχουνε ΑΛΛΟΥΣ θεούς τότε.

(Until I started school I then learned that there is Greece, that Greece indeed exists (.) we read that in the Bible back then small we were small children. (xxx) Then I was in e::h primary school (.) >I did not know where Greece was< if there is or there is not (.) and I said to (.) and they told us abou::t (.) I was in primary school (.) and they read us the Bible various Christians speaking about Athens there is Athens inside where Peter saint Peter came here to teach the people about Christians, he went somewhere to Acropolis, they said that hm:: what they say is what god he talks about now (.) unknown god >we don't know the face< then there were no Christians here ehm: in Greece they have OTHER gods then.)

In this excerpt, L. recounts an incident belonging to her childhood memories. According to her narrative, when she was living in Sierra Leone, she was already connected to Greece through Bible class, as the Christians who talked to them about God told them stories about Athens, the Acropolis, and the Apostle Peter. These recollections of hers are fused with her life in Greece after migration. In her narrative, L. introduces the deictic *here*, which indexes her present country of residence, in connection with her school education, which took place in her country of origin. This transposition of Athens into her childhood memories, the use of her current location through the adverb *here* inserted into a story taking place in the past, and her mentioning of this memory while interacting with the researcher creates a continuity between L.'s past and present life, similar to the other examples of deictic transposition analysed so far in this chapter.

A similar pattern is found in O.'s narrative, who answers the question on her first impression of the Greek language when she came to Greece by saying:

(14)

It sounds e:h (.) you you know (.) my my immediate younger sister married to a >ok Greek call it papas< ((Greek for 'priest')) married to a papa ((Greek for 'priest'))

priest. So (.) all the time if you go to church they will be talking about Greek langua::ge (.) e:h this (.) because AGAPI ((Greek for 'love')) is from here. So many things so (.) when this man will be saying it I said ah Greek (.) maybe is ancient something is not in existence. So one day I asked the man those Greek where is Greek? What you what is all these things in the Bible Greek? Eh all these things. She said eh (.) YES like America, Germany, is like Greek. I said wow (.) I can't believe it because all this is in the Bible, until I see it with my eyes so (.) when I got married my husband was living here in Greece.

Similar to L., O. fuses two chronotopes, as she relates her questions concerning Greece, which are connected to the Bible and belong to her life in Nigeria, to the *here* of her life after marriage and migration. In both examples, faith stands as a unifying element between the two selves, as the women claim knowledge of Greece before migration through the Bible and activate this knowledge by telling stories about their past selves. By introducing God and faith, their journey to Greece is coupled with the super-natural element, which holds together the two chronotopes of their lives, the one belonging to the past, in Sierra Leone (13) and Nigeria (14), and the other one pertaining to the self after migration to Greece. This continuity based on religion has been found to play an important role in the context of migration from Sub-Saharan Africa, while religiosity has been identified as one of the prime coping strategies used by migrants of colour in general (Shorter-Gooden 2004: 407). L. and O. (and all other women I spoke with) describe themselves as Christians and attend church on a regular basis. Their religious identity is, in other words, part of their everyday life. These findings are in line with various other studies who support the existence of a strong connection between religion and migration in general (e.g. Warner and Wittner 1998; Levitt 2001; Bonifacio and Angeles 2010) and in the African context in particular (e.g. van Dijk 1997; Adogame and Spikard 2010; Kane 2015).

By discursively fusing their presence in Greece with their life before migration and introducing God as a unifying element, the women present an image of themselves as following a path predetermined by fate. Greece was, in some way, present in their lives long before they could imagine moving to the country, through the Bible and their believing in God. Migration to Greece is, therefore, coupled with a positive connotation, and their place of residence is presented as being congruent with their life story (cf. Giddens 1991 on the notion of home as a response to the problem of ontological security). In this sense, their migration to Greece is linked to their biography, enabling a sense of belonging to the place they refer to by implying its connection with their sense of self (Savage et al. 2005: 29).

5.3.1.2. Spatial comparisons and the role of deixis

Apart from the uses of spatial deixis analysed so far, *here* is often used in the data in comparisons between Greece and country of origin and/or Greece and other countries, as implicit or explicit *there*. These comparisons are motivated by various interactional goals and are directly related to positioning and identity. By connecting themselves with certain places, speakers invoke specific, real or perceived centres, "to which they orient when they produce an indexical trajectory in semiosis" (Blommaert 2007b: 118). The resulting polycentricity is based on systemic patterns of indexicality. The spatial comparisons this chapter focuses on make use of this polycentricity. By connecting themselves to different centres the women claim their multiple attachment and belongings and relate to what is perceived as valuable and good by themselves, their interlocutor(s) and what has been called a superadressee, "the larger social and cultural body of authority into which we insert our immediate practices vis-à-vis our immediate addressees" (Blommaert 2007b: 118).

A large number of spatial comparisons are to be found in the data of this study. For analytical reasons they were grouped together according to the elements compared. This procedure resulted in two main groups of comparisons. In the first one, Greece is compared to country of origin in order to stress either a positive or a negative image of the first, while in the second one Greece is compared to other (European) countries, again with varying degrees of satisfaction arising from the comparison. In all examples, one part of the comparison is occupied by the deictic *here*, which refers to Greece, as the place of residence of both interlocutors in these interviews. As space is related to group membership and personal biography, these comparisons hold an important position in the context of mobility characteristic of migration.

a. Comparisons between Greece and country of origin

In numerous spatial comparisons, Greece occupies the position of *here* coupled with a positive image, while country of origin is described as *there* and is paired with negative characteristics. After grouping these examples into categories according to the patterns expressed, the superiority of Greece is found to be based mainly on two elements: security and quality of everyday life.

The pattern of associating *here* with security is recurrent in many interviews. In the following, I include two excerpts with similar argumentation:

(15)

I: Το έμπολα, με αυτά που (.) ξέρεις τώρα (.) αυτά που είναι:: δε θέλεις (.) ξέρεις (.) με όλα αυτά εγώ φοβάμαι γιατί:: αν >η Αφρική δεν είναι σαν εδώ< αν αυτές κάνει κάτι εκεί θα είναι σαν (.) μεγάλο φωτιά, φοβάμαι, δεν ξέρω. Αισθάνομαι ΠΙΟ ασφαλής εδώ (.) εδώ ναι, πιο ασφαλής, πιο:: (.) δεν ξέρω ΤΙ να πω, ΠΙΟ ασφαλής εδώ για όλα, για όλα ναι ((ψιθυρίζει)).

(I: The ebola, with these things which (.) you know now (.) these things which a:::re you don't want (.) you know (.) with all these things I am afraid becau::se if >Africa is not like here< if they do something there it will be like (.) big fire, I am afraid, I don't know. I feel SAFER here (.) here yes, safer, mo::re (.) I don't know WHAT to say, SAFER here about everything, everything yes ((whispering))

(16)

R: Do you like it in Greece?

G: Yes (.) yes I am safe here. Here is better in terms of safety (.) no robbery (.) even if there is robbery here is not much. In Nigeria you can be sleeping in the house (.) they will burst inside (.) start taking your things by force. But not every night, especially when they see that you come back from Europe (.) when they see that they will think you have money.

In these excerpts, both women focus on the theme of security, relating it to the *here* of their lives in Greece. The second part of the comparisons refers to their respective countries of origin, Sierra Leone (15) and Nigeria (16), both of which are presented as unsafe places. In excerpt (15), the adverb *here* is used three times, followed by the adjective *safe*. I. also uses the verb form *to be afraid* two times and associates Africa with *a big fire*. A similar pattern is found in G.'s narrative, where she associates space with security, relating the *here* of Greece to a life in safety while the other part of the comparison, Nigeria, is filled with insecurity. A detailed description of this insecurity follows, with G. stating that in Nigeria people might *burst inside and start taking your things by force*. Interestingly, in other parts of their narratives both women have stressed that, on the whole, they are not happy with their life in Greece. I., who has lived in the country for 20 years, is unemployed and faces hardship; she is afraid that she will be

forced to leave her flat and have nowhere to go. G. states that she is exhausted from her life in Greece, always being exploited and alone, as her husband was arrested and deported to Ghana. Nevertheless, both women opt for a positive image of the country when they compare it to their country of origin, focusing on the theme of safety.

A similar pattern is found in excerpts (17) and (18), with the focus lying in the differences in everyday life, a motif which repeats itself in numerous interviews:

(17)

R: Do you think you would raise them [the children] differently if you were in Nigeria?

S: No I prefer the life here. Nigeria hm:: each day you are suffering. We have steady electricity here (.) you can never see that in Nigeria (.) 5 minutes there is light 5 minutes no electricity (xxx) They are used to that life (laughs) so we CAN'T like me I have stayed here for yea::rs to go back the::re to do those thi::ngs I can't any more. They don't my mum >I call my every time< mum (.) what are you doing, you say I'm cooking, do you have light? NO, WITHOUT LIGHT somebody is cooking imagine. (xxx) And and and no good roads ((claps her hands)) a lot of accidents, people die like like like (.) like chickens, they don't value life there (.) like here we sleep like babies at night (xxx) there you CAN'T sleep and sleep very well (.) you are afraid of something.

(18)

P: I show you Europe is better (.) is better why? Because like me I'm fourteen years here I haven't witnessed maybe (.) this lights is closed for once, you know? Nigeria we have money but the government (xxx) you cannot find light (xxx) you see every house we have what we call generator, it brings out a lot of smoke, there was a time this thing was started killing people. Poli kunupi ((Greek for 'a lot of mosquitos')) no better life (xxx) in Africa you can't, we HAVE the money but they don't put these THINGS (.) IN (.) ORDER.

R: Did you have malaria?

P: Before when I was in Africa >ever since I come to Europe< I haven't sick for once but when I was in Africa when this thing bite me a lot you might have fever. It's like that ((whispering)). That's why people when they are here they are they are very ok because why? They ENJOY everything.

In these examples, *here* is associated with access to basic goods and services. Contrary to their countries of origin, Greece provides the women with a home where they feel at ease because of access to these commodities. S. bases her comparison on conceptualising *here* as access to electricity. She further elaborates on this by reproducing a (hypothetical) phone call with her mother who is cooking without light. P. uses a similar image. In her comparison she starts speaking about Europe only to continue by using the deictic *here*, implying there are no differences between Europe and Greece, at least concerning the points of comparison with Africa she is about to elaborate on. She then continues, mentioning that life in Nigeria exposed her to health risks which are not existent in Greece. Finally, she generalises this view, presenting it as an attitude shared by Nigerian people who are *here*, as they all collectively enjoy this life.

As with the examples on security, in excerpts (17) and (18) the women emphasise the positive sides of Greece. While associating themselves with the *here* of their lives and attributing positive characteristics to it, they claim an image of themselves as people who have achieved something positive. Interestingly, the two women are in fact facing extremely difficult life situations. S. raises her two children on her own, as her husband is in jail, facing deportation, while P. is a victim of trafficking and in possession of no legal documents. Nevertheless, they both opt for a positive image of Greece. By stressing these characteristics of the *here* and juxtaposing them to their negative experiences before migration, the women pursue certain interactional goals. Firstly, their decision to migrate, despite all difficulties, is presented in a positive light, as both women are living in a country which is, in certain aspects, superior to their country of origin. At the same time, this comparison foregrounds boundaries. By stressing the differences between Greece and country of origin and presenting a positive image of the first (and a negative one of the latter), the women claim membership in the group of people who share a life in the space designated as *here*. As identification with a group is based both on awareness of inclusion and on emotional commitment and attachment to this act of inclusion (Tajfel 1982), these comparisons can be interpreted as conscious acts of membership. Finally, through the aforementioned discursive use of space, the women present themselves as belonging to many different objects of attachment (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten 2006: 7) while projecting a positive image of themselves, as their everyday life in Greece is seen as "reflecting and making sense of their position in the order of things" (Anthias 2002: 500). According to Anthias (2002), this order is never merely representational, and the positive image of Greece is directly related to the participants' motivation to construct positive identities.

However, not all comparisons are motivated by the participants' will to present a positive image of the *here* of their lives. The following part includes excerpts where the women compare Greece to their country of origin in order to present a negative image of the first and a positive of the latter.

(19)

R: Would you raise them [the children] differently in Nigeria? Would you do some things differently as a mother or is it the same?

M: Hm, it may not really be the same because MAYBE in Nigeria I could have I could have still been working and things will be better for them. Maybe. Yes because THEN in Nigeria (.) where I was working I had a car (.) I had a car it was easy for me whether it's raining or whether it's sunny I can easily jump into my car and drive wherever I want to go, or here in Greek for insta::nce if it's raining now is a big problem to pick them up, especially if it is if there is no more ti:me if they close for the day and it's raining here every day, oh, and maybe baby is not sleeping, to carry karotsi ((Greek for 'baby carrier')) and to bring the TWO of them with the rain, ah, I feel bad, I say oh maybe if it was in Nigeria with my car that I have there ((almost whispering)), maybe I would just use umbrella (.) put all of them in the car (.) and OFF we go (.) so but it's ok.

(20)

R: Και το δικό σου θα το μεγαλώσει [η μαμά σου;

K: [Ναι

R: Θα πάει κι αυτό στο σπίτι της μαμάς σου.

K: Άστο να πηγαίνει εκεί να καταλαβαίνει τι είναι ζωή ΜΙΑ μέρα αν θα έρθει ΕΔΩ θα έχει μυαλό, δεν θα μιλάει κακό και δε θα κάνει ehe:: μάγκα μάγκα και να βάλει το μυαλό του (.) ΚΑΛΑ. Η μαμά μου ((μου δείχνει μια φωτογραφία της μαμάς της στο τηλέφωνό της)) άστον να άστον να πάει εκεί να: να δείξω τι είναι τη ζωή, κατάλαβες;

(R: And yours will be raised [by you mother?

K: [Yes.

R: It will go to your mother's house as well.

K: Let him go <u>there</u> understand what life is and ONE day if he will come <u>HERE</u> he will have good sense, he will not talk bad and he will not behave like ehe:: a swagger swagger and to learn how to have sense (.) GOOD sense. My mum ((she shows me a picture of her mother on her phone)) let him let him go there to: show what life is, you understand?)

In these examples the women describe the *here* of their lives in a negative way compared to the conditions in their countries of origin. M., who was working before migrating to Greece and finds it hard to accept her role as a housewife, mentions that she would be able to provide her children with an easier life in Nigeria, as she would have a car and would be able to move around with them. K.'s comparison focuses on her child as well. According to her narrative, she intends to send her son to Ghana, to be raised by her mother, in order to avoid him becoming disobedient and boastful. In both comparisons, the women construct a positive image of their countries of origin and consequently of themselves as members of the collective belonging to that country. M. says that in Nigeria she was a working woman, stressing part of an identity she lost after migration, while K. includes herself in the group of people who were raised not to be self-centered. As discourse is not only constitutive of identities in interaction but at the same time provides "evidence of previous patterns of formative discursive social interaction" (Scollon and Scollon 2001: 539), the two women claim a positive image of themselves associated with their previous lives, which influences their present in positive ways. These findings are in line with those of other studies focusing on the narratives of (African) migrants, where juxtaposition of country of origin and country of residence was found to be a pattern used by the participants to express their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their lives in their countries of residence after migration (e.g. Gardner 2000).

b. Comparisons between Greece and other countries

Apart from comparing Greece to country of origin, the data are rife with comparisons of Greece to other countries. The following excerpts include some examples of this pattern, while both positive and negative attitudes are expressed towards the *here* of the speaker: life in Greece.

(21)

R: Σκέφτεσαι αλήθεια να πας [<u>στη Γερμανία</u>;

H: [Αντί να καθίσω ΕΔΩ να μην έχω την άδεια να αρχίζω τα βάσανα να ρθούνε μου δώσουνε: ένα χρόνο και να πάει να δουλεύει (.) σε ένα σύστημα που: οι άνθρωποι δεν έχουνε μάθει να πληρώνουνε ένσημα να σε (xxx) αυτά είναι (.) και με την ηλικία μου τώρα (.) θα θα αρρωστήσω, κατάλαβες; θα αρρωστήσω, ε, αυτό είναι έτσι είναι τώρα γι' αυτό ((παραίτηση)) λέει η ανιψιά μου έλα να μιλήσουμε να δούμε να δούμε (.) >γιατί κι αυτή θέλει να πάω εκεί πολύ< ((γελάει))

R: Are you really thinking of going [to Germany?

H: [Instead of staying HERE not having the permit to start with all this distress they come and gi:ve me one year and I go and work (.) in a system whe:re people are not used to paying social insurance contributions they (xxx) that is (.) and at my age now (.) I will I will be sick, you understand? I will be sick, eh, that's it that's how it is now and that is why ((resigned tone)) my niece says come and talk to see to see (.) >because she wants me to go there as well a lot< ((laughs))

In this example, the *here* of the comparison is assigned negative characteristics because of the attitudes found in the country, with people not paying social insurance contributions and therefore making the renewal of migrant residence permits almost impossible. Through this comparison, personal difficulties are, at least partly, attributed to the conditions in the country of residence, contrary to what the speakers claim to be the case in other countries. Similar to the findings of the previous chapter, where the women used the pronoun *we* to construct a collectivity and include themselves in a group of people facing difficulties which can be attributed to their shared characteristics, in this example, spatial deixis and comparison is used to reduce personal responsibility, by foregrounding the difficult situation all migrants are facing due to the conditions in their country of residence.

However, not all women share this negative attitude when comparing Greece to other countries. In the following excerpts the focus lies in everyday life differences between Greece and Germany:

(22)

R: So you like it here?

F: I like I like because here I can say is a free country (.) for everybody (.) if you hear stories from Germany: and other countries you can see that HERE (.) we are free.

R: What do you mean?

F: Yes because most of the people they they they go <u>there</u> like this refugee::s they said you always will take somebody's paper to work (.) because they will not allow you to work (xxxxxx) even the house (.) I have one sister (.) they were in <u>Germany</u> she and her husband (.) SMALL room small apartment the money you PAY the the electricity money you PAY the tax you PAY I say here, <u>here</u> everything is cheap everything is low.

(23)

R: Ανησυχείς τώρα με όλα αυτά με το ευρώ; (Are you worried now with all that is happening with the euro?)

N: Θα δούμε. Αλλά τι να κάνουμε. Ό,τι γίνει είμαστε μέσα, τι να κάνουμε; (We will see. But what can we do. No matter what happens, we are inside, what can we do?) Those who are in <u>Germany</u> they are complaining that they have regretted going <u>there</u> (.) because they are not working they are in the refugee ca::mps and they have to pay every month like 400 euros something like that despite that they are not paying rent, they don't have their freedom, you have to buy ticket, you have to do thi::s, you have to do tha::t, (xxx) so what are you going to do you go <u>there</u> or you come <u>here</u>?

In both examples, the women compare *here*, Greece, with another country, Germany. These comparisons take place after the researcher asked them whether they like Greece (22) and whether they are worried because of the financial crisis (23). In order to answer these questions, the women opt for a comparison between Greece and Germany. While referring to the experiences of other migrants and/or refugees who went to Germany, they consider themselves lucky for living *here*, as life in Greece is associated with freedom (understood in terms of less stringent control and lower cost of living). Interestingly, this positive image of the country does not align with the general impression shared by a large part of the Greek population concerning overall quality of life, especially when Greece is compared to countries in Northern Europe, such as Germany.[82] It can be argued that, by opting for this comparison, contrary to wide-spread

[82] Greek citizens often share a positive image of everyday life in Germany, especially as far as quality of life, infra-structure and social services are concerned. This image is coupled with negative stereotypes, especially through the association of Germany with discipline and dominance. According to Tsotsou (2019), the image of Germany in Greek media changed radically after the economic crisis. While in the period 2001-2009, Germany was associated with science, culture and football, resulting in an overall positive image of the country characterised by financial stability and peace, the second period examined, after 2010, features a mostly negative image of Germany in the Greek press, with a focus on the negative role it played in the Greek financial crisis. The Second World War reappears as a theme, stressing the negative image of Germany in the Greek press (Tsotsou 2019), often in relation to war reparations never paid.

beliefs in Greece about the superiority of Germany, the women claim their own voice and the right to their own opinion on their everyday lives.

On the whole, the comparisons between Greece and other countries constitute typical instances of the contradictions and ambivalence which is pivotal in migrant experience (Gardner 2000), with the women being connected in a positive way to Greece, as their country of residence which enables a certain way of life, while, at the same time, feeling attached to other, multiple objects of belonging. Nostalgia and realism, together with their multifaceted identities as female migrants of colour who are living in Greece, contribute to the complicated image found in these comparisons. This aspect of their narratives is, in other words, a reflection of the women's identities which cannot be classified as belonging exclusively to one place, as they find themselves navigating different localities and combining different attachments and aspirations with these places.

5.4. Naming places

Apart from spatial deixis, the narratives of the women contain a large number of references to specific locations, mostly neighbourhoods, which are mentioned by their names. The focus of this chapter lies in these toponyms, their relation to the participants' everyday lives and the resulting discursive construction of identities. Toponyms are interesting in terms of localisation and identity construction; as they are cultural artefacts, they do not only refer to place, they encode social meaning (Heyd and Honkanen 2015). By this discursive activation of social structures, toponyms are closely related to processes of place-making and home, which have both been found to play an important role in the context of migration (e.g. Etzold 2017; Entrikin 1991; Johnstone 2004). Knowing what to call a place can, in other words, be seen as an act of belonging (Gal 2010: 47), as a person who calls a place by its name demonstrates a form of knowledge which allows him/her to be seen as a member of a social group of locals. During this process of naming locations, people "find themselves 'owning' places by adding cultural and/or local meaning to a place reference" (Heyd and Honkanen 2015: 19). The aforementioned spatial attachments as well as the notion of home and belonging and their relation to the narrative use of toponyms are interesting subjects of analysis in the context of diaspora communities, as their members' affiliations with place stretch to different localities around the globe and their discursive mentioning adds to the creation and establishing of multi-layered

identities. This chapter focuses on the toponyms used by the participants and aims at analysing the ways they are related to social claims and identity constructions.

5.4.1. Neighbourhoods and identities

The focus of this section lies on excerpts where the women mention specific locations and put themselves on the map in order to connect their lives and trajectories with certain neighbourhoods in Athens. This spatial anchoring is motivated by various content- and context-related factors. For analytical reasons, the examples were coded for themes and groups were built based on similarity of content. According to the results, toponyms are mentioned mainly in relation to workplace, religion, and new home. The special case of Omonia square and the role it plays in a large number of narratives motivated positing a category including references to this place only. According to the results of this coding, the women present themselves as working, religious migrants, who have created a home in Athens, while moving around the city and anchoring their lives in different ways around Omonia square, as a hub of immigrant life in the city. These characteristics do not describe every single participant of the study, as the group is characterised by diversity. However, they mirror a tendency found in this group on the whole. In the following sections, the different domains of life which are associated with neighbourhoods in Athens will be analysed, with a focus on the relation between toponyms and identity and its discursive activation in the narratives of the women.

5.4.1.1. Work

The majority of toponyms found in the data relate to the women's workplace. According to their profiles, the women who work can be divided into two groups, those working as domestic help, with most of them referring to live-in jobs, and those occupied in other domains of the service sector. As far as domestic help is concerned, with one exception, the women who referred to live-in jobs were not in these positions any more at the time of the interview.

In the following excerpt, I. remembers how she arrived in Greece and retells her experiences during the first few months:

(24)

Και όταν ήρθα εδώ αμέσως πιάνει δουλειά (.) >ούτε ΕΝΑ μήνα δεν έκατσα το σπίτι< δεν ήξερα:: τη γλώσσα πήγε και δούλευε live-in στην Κηφισιά με δύο παιδιά (.) Άντζελα και Νί::κο, ήτανε καλά παιδιά και έ::φυγα απο κει:: έτσι αρχίζω να αλλάξει τις δουλειές.

(And when I came here straight away I start work (.) >I didn't stay at home not even ONE month< I didn't kno::w the language and went to work live-in in Kifisia with two children (.) Angela and Ni::ko, they were good kids and I le::ft from the::re and like that I start changing jobs.)

Some minutes later, I. answers the question on how she learned Greek by saying:

(25)

Ελληνικά μου (.) δούλευα στην Παγκράτι σε μία γιαγιά (.) και:: εγώ μου άρεσε να βλέπω τα παλιά έργο (.) τα έργα:: για Μπακαλόγατο >τέτοια πράμα εγώ μου αρέσει<.

(My Greek (.) I worked in Pagrati at a grandmother (.) a::nd I liked watching the old films (.) the fi::lm about Bakalogato[83] >these things I like<.)

In both examples, the mentioning of the neighbourhood can be characterised as additional, background information, as the focus of the narrative lies on other topics, the speaker's first experiences in Greece, in excerpt (24), and her language learning trajectory, in excerpt (25). However, in both examples, I. opts for anchoring her story to a specific geolocation. In the first excerpt, the toponym Kifisia, a well-off neighbourhood in the North of Athens, is followed by a mention of the names of the children she took care of, Angela and Nikos. This precision marks a path. By providing specific information, I. sets a mark in space and claims presence in her new country of residence as well as social ties to the people she worked with. These examples are in contrast to the findings of De Fina (2003a) on migrants and border crossing, where vagueness of orientation was interpreted as lack of agency and loss of control by migrants who found themselves in the hands of smugglers (De Fina 2003a: 379). The opposite image is created in I.'s narrative, which includes details on exact locations. This activation of space can be interpreted as an act of agency, while I. is claiming for herself the image of a woman who has power and control over her life.

[83] *Bakalogatos* is a Greek comedy, produced in 1963. Its stars famous Greek actors and was a very successful film in Greece.

A similar example is found in K.'s narrative, where she describes her first months in Greece by saying:

(26)

Κ: Αυτή έβρηκε δουλειά για μέ::να Κορυδαλλός, Κορρυδαλλός (.) εκεί (χχχ) τώρα είναι 6 χρόνων θα δώσει εμένα >εγώ δε μιλάει ελληνικά μιλάει μόνο αγγλικά< θα δώσει 500 [ευρώ] εγώ σου είπα δεν πειράζει (.) μέσα έχει δωμάτιο θα κοιμηθώ εκεί: και έχει μία αγόρι Αντώ:νη (.) εγώ σου είπα δεν πειράζει >να είναι εγώ θέλεις να μάθει να ΜΙΛΑΕΙ ελληνικά< δε με νοιάζει πόσα λεφτά θα δίνει.

(K: She found work for me:: Koridalos, Koridalos (.) there (xxx) now is 6 years, will give me >I don't speak Greek speak I speak only English< will give 500 [euros] I told you it doesn't matter (.) inside there is a room I will sleep the:re and there is one boy Ando:ni (.) I told you it doesn't matter >to be I want to learn to SPEAK Greek< I don't care how much money she will give.)

Some minutes later, while having changed the topic, she mentions another neighbourhood in connection to her work as live-in domestic help:

(27)

Κ: Εγώ:: δεν μισώ κανένα και Έλληνες εδώ αυτοί (χχχ) γιατί εγώ δουλεύω μαζί τους Γλυφά::δα σου ορκίζομαι <μια γυναίκα> ((αργά για να το τονίσει)) >εγώ δεν το είδα ποτέ< τη ζωή μου ΜΟΪΡΑ <πολύ καλή γυναίκα> ((αργά για να το τονίσει)).

(K: I:: don't hate anybody and Greeks here they (xxx) because I work with them Glifa::da I swear to you <a woman> ((slow and stressed)) >I never saw that< in my life MOIRA <very good woman> ((slow and stressed))

Like I., K. associates neighbourhood names with her trajectory during the first years in Greece, a time when she was not a competent speaker of the language and was forced to accept live-in jobs. The neighbourhoods she mentions are connected with real-life characters, who are explicitly called by their names. Similar examples can be found in the stories of other women who worked as domestic help, and discursively claim their presence in Athens by anchoring themselves in certain neighbourhoods. These findings stand in contrast with various studies on the invisibility of domestic workers, especially those occupied in live-in jobs (e.g. Anderson 1999; Parreñas 2015; Lorente 2018). In the data of this study, the *invisible* migrants claim ownership of the places where they worked, in retrospect, by explicitly evoking them as parts

of their biographies. The invisibility they found themselves in during their first years of migration is, in other words, reconstructed in retrospect and their presence in the city is anchored to specific neighbourhoods and homes filled with people who they refer to by their names, therefore giving them the role of a witness in their narrative.

Similar anchoring of place is found in a large number of interviews. In the following excerpts, the women relate toponyms to work other than domestic help.

(28)

Α: Τα παιδιά εγώ τα κάνω μπά::νιο τα φαγητά τους τα φτιάχνω σε ένα ζεστό μπολ και τα πάω εκεί κι αυτός (.) μόνο αυτό να ζεστάνεις φαγητό (.) να πας τηλεόραση να βλέπει τα παιδιά και ύπνο (.) τίποτα άλλο και όταν γυρνάω γιατί σχολάω ε:: μία η ώρα στο βράδυ έφτασα σπίτι τρεις γιατί ήταν Γλυφάδα (.) και όταν έφτανα πήγαινα να το παίρνω τα παιδιά >γιατί είναι κοντά στο σπίτι μου< και τα έπαιρνα στο σπίτι.

(A: The kids I give them a ba::th their food I make them in a hot bowl and I take them there and he (.) only this to warm up the food (.) and go tv for the kids to watch and to bed (.) nothing else and when I come back because I finish e::h at one at night I arrived home at three because it was Glifada (.) and when I arrived I went to take the kids >because it is close to my house< and I took them home.)

In this example, A. describes how she combined work in a restaurant in Glifada, a wealthy coastal suburb in the south of Athens, with childcare. As there was a time when both A. and her husband were working night shifts, when A. had to go to work, she brought her children to a neighbour and took them back at 3 am, after returning to her neighbourhood. The mention of the neighbourhood where she was working serves as a marker which stresses the distance between A.'s workplace and her home. As the researcher has visited A.'s house in Kato Patisia several times, she is aware of the locations she is referring to. By anchoring her workplace in Glifada, A. creates a specific (and lengthy) trajectory in the city. At the same time, she refers to shared knowledge with the researcher, creating a ground of mutual understanding while stressing the image of herself as a strong woman, a mother of three children who manages to combine work with childcare while coping with difficult circumstances. Keeping in mind that the interview can be described as a setting where cultural practices and social values are performed, contested and reinforced (Oakley 1999), mention of the toponym and the shared knowledge it activates between interviewer and interviewee serves as a means of enhancing A.'s identity. Wider cultural narratives concerning the characteristics of a good woman, who

works and supports her family, and a good mother, who is always taking care of her children, contribute to the production of A.'s story (cf. Moen 2006; Taylor 2010). Localisation through toponyms plays an important role in anchoring this identity on the common ground of the city.

Another interesting example of toponym use is found in P.'s story. In the analysis of her narrative on her journey of migration in 5.3.1.1. (excerpt 11), the vagueness in her description was interpreted as mirroring the circumstances of her life, since P. was brought to Greece as a victim of trafficking and was forced to work as a prostitute until her trafficker was arrested. This insecurity is reflected in the spatial deictics she uses in excerpt (11). However, in the following excerpt, where P. recounts how she started working as a prostitute, her description becomes very precise:

(29)

P: They tell her to take me along with her to the place where she is working. And in the evening I went with her in one place Philadelphia (.) Philadelphia there was a bar called e:h e:h e:h (6) the man that have this club also have eh Showcase there was a place to dance they call it Showcase (xxx) they were dancing they were doing pole >I haven't do this before< HOW I will be able I was just crying.

At this point in her narrative, P. refers to her first day at work, when she went together with another girl, who was appointed as her chaperone, to a strip club where she had to dance in front of an audience. In her story, she first mentions the neighbourhood she was taken to, Nea Philadelphia, and then tries to remember the name of the club. As she does not succeed, she gives the name of another strip club owned by the same person. This description of hers provides an exact location of the place where her sexual exploitation started and stands in contrast with her vague description of her route of migration. By anchoring in space her experience as a trafficked woman, P. stresses her identity as a victim. The toponym stands as a tangible proof of her trajectory and can be related to her claim for asylum as a victim of trafficking, which is stressed in various parts of her narrative.

As regards the activation of places through mentioning neighbourhood names, it can be argued that the findings so far do not concur either with Greek public discourse, which places migrants in the margins of society and space (Koutrolikou and Siatitsa 2011; Balampanidis and Polyzos 2016), or with research on migrant trajectories in the city of Athens, which describe migrants as clustering around certain neighbourhoods, living and working almost exclusively there (i.e. Kipseli and Metaxourgio in Balampanidis and Polyzos 2016). The participants in this

study do not align with this image of restricted mobility and ghettoized life within immigrant neighbourhoods, as they mention different locations, and create an image of mobility. Their workplaces can be found all over the city, ranging from south to north and comprising middle-class as well as affluent neighbourhoods. Despite the fact that they are, indeed, living around the axes mentioned in the bibliography as the centres of migrant housing, work seems to relate them to a much larger geography. This discursive expansion in space is closely related to the image of the women as active agents who are in control of their lives. Finally, as the majority of toponyms are related to work, it can be argued that this part of their identity is central to them and a key factor in the spaces they occupy.

5.4.1.2. Church

Following work, the largest group of toponyms found in my data refers to religion and church, the majority of which relate to the Pentecostal churches the women attend. This discursive claim of their presence in the city as religious beings reflects the strong position of the (Pentecostal) church and the important role religious faith plays in the participants' lives. The following examples mention churches, followed by their location on the map.

(30)

D: Our church is in Omonia (.) it is a Nigerian church Omonia eh::: Menandrou you know?

R: Menandrou I know yes.

D: It is a Pentecostal church. It is a Nigerian church (xxx) any African can come. You can come.

(31)

C: I was not interacting with people (.) go to church I come back (.) my church off Filis (.) it's Agathopoulou street e::h you go down Platia Amerikis then Filis (.) Agathopoulou.

(32)

R: Do you have contact to many Ghanaians here?

G: Yes because I:: attend a Ghanaian church Pentecost it's at Omonia, Sofokleus (.) we have many Ghanaians (.) our community we have Ghanaian community.

In these excerpts, the participants provide the name of their church followed by its coordinates with varying precision, ranging from a reference to its proximity to Omonia square to directions on how to reach the actual building. In excerpt (30), D. refers to the church's location followed by a question addressed to the researcher in order to make sure she knows the street she is talking about. This inclusion of the researcher creates a ground of commonality. After the researcher has assured her that she is aware of the location, D. specifies that her church is a Pentecostal church, a Nigerian church anyone can attend. This presentation of her church is in line with the findings on Pentecostalism in general and its role in shaping and sustaining identity in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as in diaspora contexts (e.g. van Dijk 1997; Burgess 2012; Aechtner 2012).

A similar image is reflected in excerpts (31) and (32), as C. (from Nigeria) and G. (from Ghana) refer to the location of their churches, providing the name of the street and specifying that it is a Pentecostal church they attend. All three excerpts refer to different churches in the city of Athens,[84] reflecting the large number of these congregations as well as their active role in the participants' lives. In his study on Pentecostalism and the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands, van Dijk (1997: 137) has argued for the existence of a deep and multifaceted linkage between Pentecostalism and Ghanaian intercontinental labor migration, which is related to "the creation of global communities of believers" (van Dijk 1997: 138). A similar image can be found concerning Nigerian Pentecostalism and its role in diaspora communities (e.g. Burgess 2012).[85] This relation between Pentecostalism, African diaspora, and identity has been the focus of academic research from various perspectives (e.g. Aechtner 2012; Maier 2011). According to the results, Pentecostalism and its image of the person as well as its connection to the circulation of goods, ideas, and people, has influenced migrants in different countries, and urban Pentecostalism has been described as "a window to the world" (van Dijk 1997: 139). By mentioning the whereabouts of their churches and their regular attendance, the participants of

[84] According to Patsiaoura (2018: 168), "Nigerian-initiated Pentecostal congregations can be found in numerous urban settings in mainland Greece and have recently expanded to island urban centers, such as on the island of Crete". In 2016, she claims that there were "around 30 African-initiated Christian congregations operating, most of which were Nigerian Pentecostal, numbering from approximately ten to a hundred members" (Patsiaoura 2018: 168).

[85] Nigeria holds a special place as regards African Christianities and Pentecostalism, since it is not only the country with the largest population in Africa but is taking a lead role in the rapid spread of (Pentecostal) Christianity, a movement that is often discussed in terms of re-evangelization or reverse mission (Patsiaoura 2018).

this study anchor their religious beliefs in their new country of residence while creating a connection between their lives in their country of origin and their new home.[86] Moreover, these data can be interpreted as a mirror of the success of the Pentecostal churches to set up "international branches" (van Dijk 1997: 142), having cultivated a form of Christian Pan-Africanism "that supersedes national ties and coalesces a diverse immigrant population" (Aechtner 2012: 171). On the whole, it can be argued that the aforementioned characteristics of the Pentecostal church, its active role in the congregations' life, its opening up to the world, and the role of family it plays for its members in diaspora, are reflected in the narratives of the women, who anchor their religious beliefs in the city while stressing their identities as religious beings.

5.4.1.3. New home(s)

Apart from work and church, place-naming in the form of providing information on exact locations is found in relation to the participants' new homes. In the following excerpt, L. from Sierra Leone describes her arrival in Greece. The excerpt is embedded in a longer narrative about her language learning trajectory.

(33)

Όταν πρωτοήρθα εδώ δεν ήξερα ελληνικά τίποτα αλφαβήτα άλλα όχι όλα (.) αλλά ήξερα αλφαβήτα (.) λίγο (.) κάτι. Και:: με φιλοξένησαν στην Γλυφάδα. (...) πήρα βίζα από αεροδρόμιο: τότε ήταν στη Γλυφάδα (.) πήρα ταξί κυρία κυρία (.) και ο ταξιτζής μου έκλεψε κιόλα γιατί από Γλυφάδα μέχρι (.) Καλλιθέα μου πήρε:: 1500 δραχμές (xxx) και ήρθα.

(When I first arrived here I did not know Greek nothing the alphabet but not all (.) but I knew the alphabet (.) a little (.) something. A::nd I was a guest in Glifada (...) I got a visa at the airpo:rt then it was in Glifada (.) I took a taxi like a lady (.) and the driver even deceived me because from Glifada to (.) Kallithea he too::k 1500 drachmas (xxx) and I came.)

[86] The relation between Pentecostalism and migration in Ghana has been traced back to the so-called prayer camps, "to which (prospective) migrants may turn for spiritual help and protection in their transnational travel […] as well as to the figure of the Pentecostal leader in the diaspora […] who represents the family head […] providing an all-encompassing model of close personal assistance and support" (van Dijk 1997: 143).

In this example, L. first refers to the exact location of the airport, which was indeed in Glifada when she first came to Greece (but was moved to a different location in March 2001). By referring to its old location, L. claims knowledge of the city of Athens as well as the changes it has experienced over time. This example mirrors her long presence in Greece. L. has lived in the country for almost 30 years and has experienced the changes that took place in the city during the last decades. In recounting her first recollections of Greece, she connects her past self –the girl who arrived at a place called Glifada lacking linguistic skills or knowledge of how to get around, reflected in her story of paying too much for the taxi ride to Kallithea, the neighbourhood where she would stay– with her present self: the woman who has spent the largest part of her life in this city and is able to incorporate its history into her narrative in a natural way. This information about space is included in an off-hand manner in L.'s discourse without being central to her narrative. It constitutes the background against which the action takes place, as L. continues by elaborating on how she learned the language. However, orientation in space plays an important role in her narrative. According to Chafe (1994: 128), orientation is "fulfilling the need that consciousness has to place itself in space and time". In this short piece of background information, which is inserted in a seemingly unimportant way in a longer stretch of narrative on language, L. provides details which anchor her in space and give her trajectory a precise form while, at the same time, she involves the listener in her story and creates a "vivid picture of characters, places or actions in the story world" (Tannen 1989: 138).

The same holds for the following excerpt, where L. is more explicit about her whereabouts in Athens:

(34)

Όσο δεν μιλούσα ελληνικά δεν ήταν εύκολο [να συναναστραφώ Ελληνίδες] έκανα παρέα με τις με Γαλλίδε:ς, με Αγγλίδες, Γαλλίδες, α:::μ πώς το λένε; (.) Αγγλίδες γιατί ήταν πολλοί στην περιοχή που έμενα (.) όταν πήγα στην ε:: <u>Κουκάκι</u> (.) εκεί έμενα:: <u>Δημητρακοπούλου</u> έμενα >θυμάμαι ακόμα την διεύθυνση< <u>17 (.) Δημητρακοπούλου</u> έμενα (.) και μετά από κει άρχιζα να μιλάω λίγο ελληνικά.

(As long as I didn't speak Greek it was not easy [to have contact with Greek women] I was hanging out with the with Fre:nch, with English, French, a:::hm how do they call it? (.) English because they were many in the neighbourhood where I was staying (.) when I went to e::h <u>Koukaki</u> (.) there I stay::ed in <u>Dimitrakopoulou</u> >I still remember

the address< 17 (.) Dimitrakopoulou I stayed (.) and from there I started speaking a little Greek.)

The topic of the narration has not changed since the last excerpt and L. is elaborating on her language learning trajectory. Information on space is, again, inserted as seemingly unimportant, additional detail. What might first appear to belong to the background, i.e. her exact address connected to her mention of the neighbourhood where she was living, serves to create a complex, vivid character, that the listener can relate to, located in space and time, at a specific address, *17 Dimitrakopoulou*, in *Koukaki*. Moreover, as L. is aware of the fact that the researcher knows the neighbourhood she is referring to, she creates a bond between herself and her interlocutor by activating this shared knowledge while recounting her past experiences.

A similar analysis is afforded by the following excerpt where K., from Ghana, refers to the first place she rented on her own in Athens:

(35)

Και έφυγε (.) και εγώ νοικιάζει δικό μου σπίτι για το Αμπελόκηποι (.) μία δωμάτιο και αυτά και κάνει έτσι ((ξαπλώνει στον καναπέ και τεντώνεται)) FREEDO::::M ((φωνάζει)) FREEDO::::M thank God ο θεός θέλει εγώ FREEDOM εγώ γυρνάω γυρίζει μόνη μου εγώ κλαίω κλάμα I am FREEDOM FREE(.)DOM δεν ξέρει τι είναι αυτό FREEDOM σαν εσύ μπει φυλακή και μετά (.) βγαίνει έξω FREE(.)DOM ((ενθουσιώδης τόνος σε ολόκληρο το απόσπασμα)).

(And I left (.) and I rent my own house for the Ampelokipi (.) one room and that's it and I do like this ((lies down on the couch and stretches)) FREEDO::::M ((shouting)) FREEDO::::M thank God God wants I FREEDOM I turn turn back on my own I cry tears I am FREEDOM FREE(.)DOM don't know what it is this FREEDOM like you go into jail and then (.) you come out FREE(.)DOM ((enthusiastic tone in the whole excerpt.))

Compared to L. (34), in K.'s case, mention of place has additional importance. K. is a victim of trafficking and managed to escape from the husband she was sold to when the ship he was working on arrived at a Greek port. After arriving in Athens, she started doing different live-in jobs until she was able to find a place of her own. This excerpt refers to the period after her occupation as live-in domestic help, when she was able to rent a small flat. Her description is emotionally laden. K. refers to her renting a flat as an act of freedom, comparable to the

experience of someone who has been released from prison. She recounts this memory in a loud voice and her body language underlines her elation. All aforementioned characteristics of her speech are connected with a specific location, the flat she rented in the neighbourhood of Ambelokipi. Again, a seemingly unimportant piece of information anchors a person's experience in space, providing a real-life perspective and connecting her narrative to the place she inhabits, while activating the knowledge she shares with her interlocutor and creating a mutual point of reference in lives which are, on the whole, radically different from each other.[87]

5.4.1.4. Omonia square

In the data provided so far, the women refer to different neighbourhoods and relate them to work, religion, and images of home. In this section, the focus lies on Omonia square. Leisure, social relations, shopping, taking part in language courses and contacting organisations working with migrants are all connected with Omonia square in the women's narratives. As this location appears repeatedly and seems to hold an important position in their discourse, it will be analysed separately.

Omonia is one of the oldest squares in the city of Athens, originally conceived as a sort of Place de la Concorde, after which it was named, and constitutes one of the city's principal traffic hubs (Cappuccini 2018: 22). In more recent decades, it has attracted large numbers of migrants and refugees of diverse origins and backgrounds, some of whom also run small businesses in the immediately surrounding area (notably ethnic grocery stores); these populations have transformed the square's public image, which has been described as reflecting "the temporariness and transitional character of the migrant experience" (Noussia and Lyons 2009: 619). These changes have resulted in Omonia's transformation into a place with two faces: a lively shopping area with numerous markets, traffic and large numbers of people moving around during the day, which becomes an infamous place at night, while the high criminality rates found around the square are associated with migrant presence in its vicinity (Kandylis 2013: 257-258). In public discourse, Omonia has been associated with de-gentrification, devaluation and informality, petty crime and the local drug pushing scene, all of which have been linked to migrants, resulting in the square often being described as a ghetto

[87] Common knowledge in the form of common ground has been the focus of various linguistic studies (e.g. Clark 1996; Keysar et al. 1998)

(Hatziprokopiou and Frangopoulos 2016: 61-62). Similar to other places in Athens,[88] the recent economic crisis has had a serious impact on the commercial activity around Omonia square, with many shops being closed, while the area has been experiencing "the rise of xenophobic attitudes, primarily produced by mainstream media and extreme right political entities" (Koutrolikou 2015: 181).

This image of Omonia in Greek public discourse (and the Greek imaginary) serves as a background for the analysis of the women's narratives. After collecting all references to the square and categorising them according to similarity, it becomes clear that the image produced by the participants themselves differs from the aforementioned negative perception of the square in public discourse. The women describe Omonia as a place which is connected to their lives in various ways, while no single incident of a negative experience connected to this locality is found in the data. Omonia is, on the contrary, associated with being a lively location with different uses of space, playing a role in the participants' everyday lives, their religious practices and their trajectories in the city. In the following part I will analyse some of the excerpts where Omonia is mentioned in relation to different uses of space.

a. shopping

(36)

R: And why Xylokastro?

M: Because if he stays in Athens all those things are in Athens (.) we have Omonia:: >so many people< use the place (xxx) if they need some things like things in Omonia they can hardly come because of roloi ((Greek for 'watch')) to Omonia so they can easily buy from [him].[89]

In this excerpt, M. elaborates on the reasons why her husband is working in Xylokastro, a small coastal town in the Peloponnese, approximately an hour's drive from Athens. In her explanation, the location *Omonia* is repeated three times. First, Omonia is claimed as a space belonging to those inhabiting the city. By using the pronoun *we*, M. includes herself in this

[88] During the years of the economic recession, more than 27% of stores and services, both in central streets and in less commercial parts of Athens, were recorded as closed (Polyzou 2020).

[89] In this excerpt, M. refers to the fact that the people living in the town of Xylokastro do not come to Athens only to buy something they need, like for example a watch. As they do not have access to the big markets found in the capital, they buy the things they need from her husband, who commutes to their town on a daily basis.

group and draws a line between *us*, living in Athens and having access to all the goods sold in Omonia, and an implicit *them*, living further away and not being able to come to the city centre just to buy something, like for example a watch. As M.'s husband is part of the group of people who have access to Omonia, he uses this possibility in order to provide those living further away with what they need. In this excerpt, M. relates a place to certain activities, reflecting the role of Omonia in trade and commerce, and claiming her share in these activities through her husband.

The image of Omonia as a bustling place where one has access to various, cheap goods is also found in O.'s narrative, where she elaborates on how she will cook a big pie and distribute it to Syrian refugees living on Victoria square in Athens (a few hundred meters away from Omonia).

(37)

R: What are you going to do for Christmas?

O: ((laughs)) My pla::n is (.) I want to: (.) because I bake (.) I bake (.) I'll bake there's something we call meat pie sometimes I do if I bake I take to Victoria (.) give all this Syria:ns >give to them< buy dri:nks buy juice for the children, to give to them (.) so I'm planning to make at least (.) maybe triakosia ((Greek for 'three hundred')) pieces.

R: 300 pieces? That is a lot.

O: I make 100 pieces the other day. I buy meat Omonia:: 30 euros meats, buy flou:r from Lidl buy butter buy milk buy egg at least make it (.) fifty: (.) peninta evro ((Greek for 'fifty euros')) so I make it I take it there give to them.

In this excerpt, Omonia figures as one of the places O. visits to buy what she needs in order to cook. It can be assumed that this holds for her everyday shopping as well. The role of Omonia as a "central purchase and supply point for a considerable share of the migrant population" (Polyzou 2020), a place bustling with commercial activity, is reconstructed discursively in the two excerpts. Moreover, by mentioning the existence of large numbers of refugees at Victoria square, only a few hundred meters away from Omonia, this neighbourhood is presented as a focal point for foreign migrants who have lived in Greece for decades as well as for those who have just arrived. Omonia square plays a similar role for Greeks coming to Athens for the first time as well. As an essential cross-roads and transportation hub it is a common point of arrival for people reaching the city, regardless of their country of origin.

b. Language courses and organisations

Apart from its role as a commercial center, Omonia functions as a location where several organisations related to migrants' lives can be found. In the following excerpts, the women focus on these aspects of the square, mentioning language courses and organisations offering support to migrants in need.

(38)

M: I came 2010 (...) so after that (.) I stayed e:h like e:h 3-4 months at home because >I was working in Nigeria when I came< so I was bored, I don't want to be idle I don't want to be a housewife (.) I wanted to work I thought that Greece is a place where I can COME and >even further my education maybe do< another course another course that will give me an added advanta::ge but Lord behold it's not really the place I thought hm I said ok it's ok let me >go and do some other things< so that is how I enrolled in e:h one e:h in one place in Acharnon Omonia, Ergon they call is so I was the::re there was one woman Athanasia (.) very good woman.

(39)

P: It's difficult but >Greek people they are trying< I cannot say they are not trying because when I was pregna:nt I was very ok (.) they give me makaro:nia ((Greek for 'spaghetti')) they give me foo:d a lot of clothes I go pos to lene ((Greek for 'how do they call it')), Praxis, not Praxis, Caritas, I go to one place America, they call it America is in Omonia.

Both examples provide the image of a place which is not based solely on its commercial activity. As already mentioned in the literature, Omonia plays a role in sustaining social relations and migrant networks. In the first excerpt, M. connects the square with her language learning activity and mentions the name of her teacher, a pattern already analysed in excerpts (24) and (26), where the women associated their workplace with the names of the children they took care of. In this excerpt, place is again associated with people who are mentioned by name, while the speaker anchors her life around a location, claiming her presence within it as well as her relation to institutions found in its proximity. The same holds for excerpt (39), where P. provides the location of the organisation that supported her when she experienced hardship during pregnancy. Both excerpts constitute examples of what Johnstone (1990: 91) has called "extrathematic" detail, when describing a story's details that are not relevant to its plot. This

seems to apply to many of the examples analysed so far, where the locations mentioned do not necessarily add vital information to the argument and the story; they do however provide an air of factuality, in a similar way to the narratives analysed by Johnstone (1990).

The combination of all aforementioned uses of space around Omonia, along with reference to it in relation to religion and church, results in the discursive construction of a place with multiples uses. This description reflects only partly the image found in the literature of the square as "a mosaic of liminal spaces for migrants" (Noussia and Lyons 2009: 619), as this liminality is not reflected in the data of this study and Omonia is not mentioned as a place where migrants merge recreated home life and acts of nostalgia with instrumental uses of space and survival strategies (cf. Noussia and Lyons 2009: 619). Rather, the square serves as a practical space, its use driven by the women's everyday needs. Regardless of the fact that the uses of space mentioned in the data might be connected to more complicated patterns of use in real-life, the decision of the women to refer to urban space in a matter-of-fact, need-oriented way, projects an image of themselves as active agents who use the infrastructure they have access to in order to navigate their everyday lives, similar to all inhabitants of the city, migrants and locals alike. In the women's narratives Omonia is presented as a place one passes by, a cross-roads and commercial centre for any number of goods and services, especially goods and services at low cost, accessible to all populations living in the city.

To conclude, it can be argued that the women use explicit references to space in order to position themselves, while claiming identities and negotiating images of the self in their country of residence. These findings are in line with the position of Myers's (2006: 321), according to which "[r]eferences to place project [...] possibilities for talk, evaluating and defending, telling stories, and arguing. So references to place are important, not just for finding out about places, but also for finding identities in talk." According to this line of thought, references to space found in the data and the accounts of space and specific locations in the stories told by the women, provide an image of themselves as working, religious migrants, who have arrived at their destination and use urban space according to their daily needs. The liminality of their lives is, in other words, not the focus of their narratives, especially in relation to space, and therefore not a form of identity they want to emphasise.

As narratives are an "ideal locus for the study of identity" (De Fina 2003b: 217), the image of the self as an active agent is stressed through the discursive construction of place. The social meaning of space, which goes beyond what is being said in a story and might contradict the expectations about the ways the women position themselves in relation to the space they

inhabit, reveals information on the roles they assign themselves. These identities, similar to the examples found in the work of De Fina (2003b: 220), are "more projected than openly discussed", therefore making discourse analysis an important tool in order to gain access to them. And as all identity work can, amongst other things, be seen as positioning the self in relation to the wider social context (cf. Bamberg 1997), these instances of claiming space can be interpreted as an act of resistance against the widespread negative images of migrants in the Greek public sphere.

CHAPTER SIX

SPEECH REPRESENTATION

6.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the analysis of speech representation in the participants' narratives and its relation to the construction of situated identities. Over the last decades, scholars from various backgrounds have approached oral narratives and analysed the techniques speakers use in order to construct their narrative worlds. As early as 1967, Labov and Waletzky (1967: 13) defined narrative as "one verbal technique for recapitulating past experience, in particular a technique of constructing narrative units which match the temporal sequence of that experience". The temporal ordering between at least two clauses and its organisation into structural components were seen as an integral part of any narrative (Labov and Waletzky 1967: 378-380). Since then, narrative, discourse, and identity have been studied by researchers from various perspectives. As already mentioned in 2.2., this study adopts a social constructionist approach (cf. Bucholtz and Hall 2003, 2005; Agha 2007; Archakis and Tsakona 2012) and sees discourse as a means used by speakers who construct their identities and position themselves towards hegemonic views, while group membership and social categories play a primordial role in defining these acts of positioning (cf. Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 30-34; Bucholtz and Hall 2003, 2005). According to this approach, language constitutes one of the tools speakers manipulate in order to shape the worlds they inhabit. From this perspective, narrative can be described as a "linguistic lens" (Schiffrin 1996: 199), and conversational choices are seen as acts of identification (cf. Archakis and Tzanne 2005; Archakis and Lampropoulou 2010).

The narrative construction and projection of identities takes place through acts of positioning in the story's narrative world (Bamberg 1997). According to Bamberg's framework, positioning occurs at three levels of performance: between story characters (level 1), answering the question concerning their positioning in relation to one another, between the narrator and the audience (level 2), revealing the ways the former positions herself/himself in relation to the latter, and finally between the narrator and the wider social and ideological context (level 3). The last level aims at answering the question "who am I?" (Bamberg 1997: 337). Bamberg's framework has been used by researchers working in discourse analysis interested in examining the ways identities are constructed and claimed interactionally by individuals who are, at the

same time, part of wider social networks (Archakis and Tsakona 2012; Archakis and Lampropoulou 2010). A dynamic view of identity as a construction rather than a static property of the individual is presupposed. All three levels of positioning, alongside with cultural discourses and normative positions (cf. Georgakopoulou 1997; De Fina 2003b; De Fina 2016; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020) will be taken into consideration in the analysis of direct speech used by the participants of this study.

In this context, the contribution of the audience should not be underestimated. De Fina and Georgakopoulou's (2008) Social Interactional Approach defines narrative not only as talk-in-interaction, but also as social practice. According to this approach, the audience does not figure as a passive recipient. Its role is instrumental in shaping the ways the narrator tells a story, resulting in the setting of a focus, in different modifications and in specific forms of presentation (Ochs and Capps 2001). The centrality of the interviewer in the production of talk should, therefore, not be underestimated (Rapley 2001) and narratives should be approached as emergent through interaction, "a joint venture and the outcome of negotiation by interlocutors" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008: 381). Narrative identities are, consequently, shaped by the speakers' expectations and their will to be accepted by the other (Collins, Shatell and Thomas 2005). Based on these assumptions, I will analyse my data as co-constructions between the participants who produce the narratives, the researcher, who functions as the recipient of their stories, and the wider social context defining what can be told and in what ways.

6.2. Narrative use of direct reported speech

Speech representation[90] holds a central position in narratives. According to Bakhtin (1981: 338) "in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about". This central position of others' words in personal stories is stressed by Koven (1998: 417), who argues that replaying and enacting past speech events while evaluating them is one of the central points of personal stories. This evaluation can be either external, when speakers explicitly explain a point, or internal, conveyed through the story itself (Labov 1972). The use of direct reported speech is one of the mechanisms speakers employ in order to perform internal evaluations, as it allows the recipients to make inferences and reach their own conclusions about the events and

[90] This term refers to "the report of the words of a speaker" (Archakis and Lampropoulou 2006). According to Lampropoulou (2012), it reflects the constructed nature of reported speech, relating the modifications of the content of an utterance to changes in the context of its use.

characters involved in the story world (cf. Archakis and Lampropoulou 2006). According to Goffman (1981: 226), the use of reported speech allows narrators to change their perspective and adopt different roles, figuring as the animator, the author or the principal vis-à-vis the stories they tell. These shifts of footing, "the alignment of an individual to a particular utterance" (Goffman 1981: 227), give the narrator the chance to highlight the different identities s/he assumes in the story world, serving both the character who is speaking and the author who is reporting his/her words (Bakhtin 1981).

Reporting other people's speech in one's own story is by no means a passive act. Even if the words reported were uttered exactly the way the speaker reproduces them –which is extremely rare– their embedding in a different context is already an act of transformation (Bakhtin 1981: 340). As the narrator's and the character's voices are blended, different degrees of embedding are possible (Bakhtin 1981), while points of view, related to different types of reported speech, are manipulated (Polanyi 1982). In this context, the question of the constructed nature of reported speech is of central importance. Concerning authenticity, Mayes (1990: 331) argues that more than half of the reported speech incidents found in her data are invented by the speaker. This ambiguous relationship between reported speech and original words led Tannen to the adoption of the term "constructed dialogue" since "much of what appears in discourse as dialogue, or reported speech, was never uttered by anyone else in any form" (Tannen 1989: 100). According to Tannen, reported words get constructed in interaction, therefore the term *reported speech* is misleading; all reproduction of other people's words are the speaker's creation, she claims, "just as surely as playwrights, film makers, or fiction writers create dialogue" (1989: 21).

Apart from individual speaker intentions, social context plays an important role in defining the ways speech is integrated into narrative, while the line between fact and fiction is drawn culturally (Johnstone 1990: 100). Reporting speech is, therefore, not only a means for personal identity construction; it is "a societal resource, used in different ways by speech communities" (De Fina 2003b: 96). Cultural background is, therefore, expected to reflect on the structure's differential use (Wolfson 1978). Stories told by Greek speakers have, for example, been found to include more instances of constructed dialogue than similar stories told by American speakers (Tannen 1989: 14). In a similar vein, Lampropoulou (2012: xii-x) argues that in addition to fulfilling interactional goals, direct speech can be seen as "the linguistic manifestation of shared repertoire in particular communities of practice". This social component of reported speech will be taken into consideration in the dataset under analysis.

The focus on direct reported speech was motivated by the amplitude of this structure in the dataset alongside its use in certain contexts and its resulting significance in the construction of narrative identities. The analysis aims at assessing which acts are given salience and are, therefore, reproduced by the participants in the context of their interaction with the researcher, as other people's voices are only represented when they serve a purpose (Baynham and Slembrouck 1999: 451). The roles the participants assume in their narratives and in the present interactional event and the views they hold during the reported interactions are also taken into consideration. Based on De Fina and Georgakopoulou's (2008) Social Interactional Approach, the analysis goes beyond the local level and aims at discovering articulations between the micro- and the macro-levels of social action. A contextual analysis of situated, cultural, and social identities (cf. Archakis and Lampropoulou 2010) is, therefore, undertaken. To this end, topics, speaker roles, degrees of initiative, speaking rights, interactional goals and wider social relations inform the analysis.

6.3. Data analysis

As already mentioned, the dataset is rich in examples of speech representation. Without any exception, all interviews contain instances of direct reported speech either as part of longer stretches of talk or as short statements illustrating a claim. In order to facilitate the analysis, the examples were coded according to themes, resulting in the following most salient categories: verbal racist attacks, language experiences and stories of self-disclosure. As some examples can be included in more than one category, their assignment to a group was made based on its most prominent theme. In all categories, the characters' roles, the distribution of speaking rights, and the different functions of reported speech are analysed in order to unveil the speakers' interactional goals, while viewing reported speech as contributing to the dramatization of the narrative and adding a performative element, which is absent in mere acts of telling (cf. Georgakopoulou 1997; Lampropoulou 2012).

6.3.1. Racist verbal attacks

In this category the focus is set on racist verbal attacks. In the first excerpt, C., a Nigerian migrant who has been living in Greece for three years and has limited knowledge of Greek, describes an experience she had shortly after arriving in the country.

(1)

There was a day we are going to hospital (.) so a::: a lady and a man (.) the man was driving (.) this car. FIGE FIGE FIGE FIGE FIGE STIN ELLADA ((Greek for 'leave leave leave leave leave TO GREECE')) you know they shouted fige fige fige fige ((Greek for 'leave, leave, leave, leave')). Me and my husband (.) I was asking what did they say. He said don't mind these people, they are racist. That was when I came. So rude.

In this example, all characters who appear in the story world are in possession of speaking rights. C. first describes the setting: the incident took place when she was pregnant. She was walking on the street with her husband on their way to hospital, when two random people from inside a car started shouting at them. The attack is reproduced in direct reported speech. The threat, a repeated use of the imperative *leave*, is followed by the verb *shouted*, used metalinguistically as a comment on the way the two people spoke. More repetitions of the imperative *leave* and the addition of a locative follow.[91] The incident is recounted with a strong, performative element, using a high-pitched voice, which enables the listener to reconstruct the exact way the words were spoken. After the attack, C. moves on to her reaction. At the time of the incident she did not speak Greek, as she had arrived in the country only a short time ago; therefore, she turned to her husband to ask him what the two people were saying. Her words are rendered in direct reported speech as well. The same holds for the husband's response, which is introduced by the verb *said*, followed by direct speech. According to C.'s narrative, her husband decided not to translate the racist attack; in a way he protected her by providing only an interpretation and explaining that these people are racist, sparing her the exact wording of the insult.

Following Bamberg's model (1997), at the first level, the three sides are positioned as follows: the two people shouting are in represented a position of power. The image of them seated in a car, while C. and her husband are on foot, gives them a symbolic advantage, which is enforced by the verbal attack they perform, presenting them as strong and aggressive. C., on the contrary, who does not understand the language, is lacking power and agency. She is the weakest of all characters involved in the story; not only is she incapable of reacting against a racist attack, she is not even in the position to decipher it linguistically. Finally, compared to

[91] Insults have been found to regularly contain locative phrases, as for example, 'fuck off back to your own country' (Stokoe and Edwards 2007: 357).

C., her husband possesses agency, as he assumes the role of the interpreter.[92] However, similar to C., he does not react to the insult; he ignores it and urges C. to do the same. On the second level of positioning, the use of the marker *you know*, a "discursive bonding device" (Mildorf 2008: 293) which aims at establishing mutual understanding between speaker and listener, while inviting the listener to adopt the speakers' point of view, supports this objective. Finally, on the third level of positioning, the two people in the car are exposed as racists, while C. and her husband are presented as reluctant to react when facing unjust behaviour, therefore evoking the researcher's solidarity. In the broader social context, C. and her husband stand as examples of victims of verbal racist attacks. They were not insulted because of their personal traits; they were targeted as subjects of racial discrimination because they belong to a minority of dark-skinned people living in Athens. Therefore, this incident can be read as a collective experience of the group they belong to.

As far as the function of direct reported speech is concerned, by reproducing the words of the attackers, C. performs an act of evaluation (cf. Koester and Handford 2018; De Fina 2016, 2003b; Ebrahim 2016; O'Connor 1997). She assesses their behaviour in a negative way and presents them as aggressive and rude. The repetition of the exact wording they used to insult them can be seen as evidence for C.'s position, while she is, at the same time, epitomising the condition she finds herself in (cf. Buttny 1997: 478). The audience should, therefore, regard this incident as one out of a series of verbal attacks C. has faced as a member of the group of African migrants. This analysis is supported by other women's narratives containing an amplitude of similar examples. Verbal racist attacks of this form are, in other words, a recurrent pattern and the women refer to them using direct reported speech.

Verbal abuses belong, without any doubt, to the experience the participants of this study have on a regular basis. However, the quote C. reproduces is a highly improbable one. C., who did not speak Greek at the time of the incident (and still has limited proficiency at the time of the interview), repeats the words of the people who attacked them and uses the Greek language and direct speech, only to continue by saying that she was in need of translation, as she did not

[92] According to Cronin (2006: 45), for migrants, translation "is a question of real, immediate and urgent seriousness"; it can "in some instances indeed be a matter of life and death". The reliance of migrant populations on translation and the power relations arising between translator (and interpreter) and migrant has been the focus of various researchers working in the fields of migration and translation studies (i.e. Giordano 2014 on translation, migration and psychiatry; Mikkelson 2008 on interpreting in court settings; Angelelli 2008 on the role of interpreters in the health care system). According to Polezzi (2012), translation is at the same time a form of support and a means of control; "the need for mediation reiterates difference and makes it officially visible in the same gesture which is meant to bridge it" (Polezzi 2012: 349), she argues.

understand what they were saying. However, if C. did not understand their words, it is highly improbable that she would be able to memorise them. The attack was probably reconstructed in retrospect, after C. had learned some Greek and had experienced other, similar situations. This analysis of the quote as an improbable one is supported by the fact that it contains a grammatical mistake in Greek (the preposition *se*, Greek for 'in', is used instead of the preposition *apo*, Greek for 'from'). It is, therefore, very improbable that it was uttered in this exact form. Most probably, C. has reconstructed the verbal attack in retrospect, while using her knowledge of Greek and direct speech in order to present the incident in a lively and credible way. Therefore, this incident is better described as constructed rather than reproduced and stands in line with the analysis of Tannen (1989) on the constructed nature of direct reported speech in narratives.

The analysis of this quote as a highly improbable one is reinforced by the element of chorality. According to C., the two people in the car spoke the verbal attack simultaneously. Although this is not impossible and one can imagine two people shouting insults out of a passing-by vehicle at the same time, it is more plausible that the statement reproduced was uttered by one person. This element of chorality in the issuing of a threat emphasizes the role of the group (cf. De Fina 2003b: 130, 136) and is used by C. to stress the fact that her experience is not a one-off incident. It is, on the contrary, a recurrent pattern. Consequently, it must be assumed that C. dramatizes her experience in order to convince her audience and the use of direct reported speech is not motivated by authenticity but by the speaker's intention to signal that the event she reconstructs is remarkable (cf. Mildorf 2008). Needless to say, the discussion of the authenticity of the quoted utterances is not related to any kind of judgement of the speakers' narratives. It is only important and relevant concerning their discursive identity constructions.

In the following episode, E. recounts a racist verbal attack she experienced when accompanying her grandson on their way home from school:

(2)

Let me just give you the one of recent. I think it is about e:::h (.) peripu ((Greek for 'approximately')) Thursday last week. I went to go and bring David from the school. As soon we are coming as we just came out we miss the trolei ((Greek for 'trolley bus)) 14 that is coming to the house (.) both of us started getting very angry so we just stand (…) We are just standing there (.) by that side of the pavement. Then one man was coming

with his car (.) is an old man an elderly man he was coming with his car. >As soon as he just see the two of us< (.) FIGE FIGE FIGE ((Greek for 'leave, leave, leave')) he was doing ((moves her hand in a way that orders someone to leave)) (.) I look I say (.) what is this man crazy? (.) then he came came came came and he say don't you see me telling you to go? (4) >I didn't say anything< (.) because I don't know if he is talking to me. Kiria mu ((Greek for 'my lady')) (.) I speak Greek I say kiria mu ((Greek for 'my lady')) I am talking to you and I say ME? (.) he said yes (.) I said you are not talking to me >he say I told you to go I said to go to your house< or where where where do you want me to go? I say THIS place is not is it your bedroom? Even David say David say he say MALAKA ((Greek for 'asshole)) ((surprised)) I say DAVID NO don't speak like that to him (.) he said malaka ((Greek for 'asshole')), PU THELIS NA PAO PU NA PAO TORA? ((Greek for 'where do you want me to go where should I go now?')) You know. I said David leave it, >he is an elderly person, I don't want you to I don't want you be this bad (xxx) >Leave it let me talk to him< (.) I wish I can speak the Greek very well that time.

In this excerpt, E. recounts an experience similar to the one described by C. in example (1). The incident is reconstructed in a lively and convincing way. Fast turn-taking and reconstructed speech give the story a dramatic effect,[94] while all characters are granted speaking rights. This impression of verisimilitude (cf. Tannen 1991: 141), created by the provision of detailed quotes together with the exact description of the setting (i.e. the location where E. and her grandson were standing, the number of the tram they were waiting for, their psychological state at the time of the incident), makes the situation appear real, giving the text the quality of an immediate experience (Chafe 1990).

In the story of E., the person performing the verbal attack, the elderly man in the car, uses the same words like the one(s) who attacked C. and her husband in excerpt (1): a loud voice repeatedly issuing a threat, using the 2nd person singular imperative of the verb *leave*. E. reproduces this quote in direct speech using a high-pitched voice. Moreover, similar to C., she reports the threat in Greek, while the rest of the story is told in English. The setting of the two examples is similar as well, as the person attacking E. and her grandson is seated in a car, while

[94] According to Lampropoulou (2011: 3380) turn taking as a discursive strategy contributes to the dramatisation of the represented speech event, because it is reconstructed in the form it is supposed to have taken place. According to her analysis, by using this strategy the speakers aim at creating what seems to be a natural and authentic reproduction of the original utterances.

the two of them are standing on the pavement. However, if one compares the two incidents, clear differences arise. While in excerpt (1) no interaction between those issuing the attack and those who are targeted by it is reported, in this example E. and her grandson both react and defend themselves. In other words, while C. and her husband are described as passive, in this excerpt the victims are given voice; they are presented as characters who stand up and take an active role in their story.

According to De Fina's (2003b: 109) categorisation of speech acts,[95] the elderly man issues a directive in the form of a threat and the grandson performs an evaluation in the form of an insult, while E. claims a more complicated role for herself. At first, she reacts to the threat by challenging the old man, asking where exactly she is supposed to go and whether she should go to his house. She, then, continues with an ironic comment, questioning him on whether he considers this place, the pavement they are standing on, his bedroom. These quotes present her as strong and willing to defend herself. However, the image changes when her grandson is assigned speaking rights and issues an insult. When the boy is given voice, E.'s attention is drawn away from the attacker. At once she seems less bothered by the stranger's attack and turns to address the language used by the 10-year-old David. The quote which follows presents E. in the role of a caretaker, who wants to correct the child's behaviour. Even in the face of an insult, she does not wish for her grandson to use bad language and reprimands him for doing so.

As already mentioned in 6.1., the audience plays a decisive role in shaping the narrative use of direct speech. At a first level of analysis, E. presents herself and her grandson as victims of racist remarks, who are not afraid to react. However, as she might believe that the researcher does not approve of her grandson swearing, she closes the story by claiming for herself a positive image as a caretaker. The last quote, where she urges her grandson not to use bad language and adds that she will take care of the incident, serves this interactional goal. Consequently, E. presents a complicated image of herself as a person who is able to change behaviour and act in an appropriate way according to the situation (cf. De Fina 2003b: 123). The inclusion of direct speech used by all characters in the story world supports this goal. Her

[95] De Fina based her coding of speech acts on Searle's categorization (1979: 1–29 in De Fina 2003b: 109), according to which speech acts belong to the categories of assertives, commissives, directives, expressives, and declarations. In her analysis she added some subcategories to the ones Searle had developed, like for example consultations, encouragements and evaluations, which were found in her data and are included in the dataset under analysis as well.

role on the third level of Bamberg's (1997) model, her position in the wider social context, shapes the multi-layered image of herself as a migrant woman, a target of racism and, at the same time, a loving and caring grandmother who will not accept inappropriate behaviour, even in confrontation.

Similar verbal racist attacks are found in D.'s narrative, who uses direct speech to reproduce different interactions:

(3)

D: Some (.) maybe you come >you are coming to the office< they don't want to look at you: ((whispering)) they don't want to talk to you they know (.) you are asking question (.) they know what you are asking but they tell you (.) den ksero (.) rota eki ((Greek for 'I don't know (.) ask there')). >You go there the person will say< den ksero ((Greek for 'I don't know')) a lot of offices KE:P ((Greek for 'Citizen's Service Centers')) and (.) this other one was in e:h IKA ((Greek for 'Social Insurance Service')) (.) some of them is like that so because they've seen black they don't want to talk to you some they don't want to talk to you they MAKE (.) it HARD for you (.) you understand? (.) to understand.

R: And in the bus and stuff like that?

D: In the bu:s is like that. You sitting down there is maybe face to face to (xxx) at times (.) you come to sit there (5) when you are coming there is some Greek who tell you >oxi oxi oxi oxi< ((Greek for 'no, no, no, no')) giati afto den ine: ((Greek for 'because this is no:t')) is not fo:r mavro ((Greek for 'black')).

R: Like that? Openly?

D: Openly ye::s.

R: And what do you do?

D: What do I do I will sit down (.) yes (.) and I say this sea:t is a bus (.) if you don't like me to sit then get a private car don't come into the bus the bus is public (.) >if you don't want anybody to sit inside< get your private car >I will not come inside it< but this is a public (xxx) but I use English to tell them. At times with strangers I use English. (5) At times you speak your language in the bus they don't like i:t (.) they start attacking you >in the bus you don't speak more than 5 minutes< you don't make call in the bus but if someone if someone have if someone do that to me I say what? a lot of people are

talking you are hearing their voice (xxx) they say fige: to patrida su ((Greek for 'lea:ve to your country')).

In this example D. includes various quotes, adding to the credibility of the incidents and the directness of the experiences (cf. Georgakopoulou 1997), while turning the narrated events into animated conversations (cf. Archakis and Tzanne 2005). In the course of the story, the distribution of speaking rights changes. In the beginning, D. grants voice only to her interlocutors, the staff of public services. By reproducing their words, she supports her claim and presents them as unwilling to cooperate, not answering her questions and urging her one after the other to address someone else.[96] These quotes are reproduced in Greek while the rest of the story is told in English, as D.'s knowledge of Greek is limited. In these settings, she does not appear to react to the staff's unwillingness to help her; she represents herself as lacking power and possessing limited agency. The image changes when D. moves on to narrate racist verbal attacks taking place in public transportation. When a random person tells her not to use a seat, because she is black and therefore not entitled to its use, these words are quoted in direct speech as well. However, while in the first setting D. does not react, in the bus she grants herself voice and reproduces her answer. A relatively long quote follows, where D. tells the person to get a private car if he does not want her to sit next to him in the bus, which is public. By reproducing this ironic answer, she presents herself as witty, ready to use sarcasm and defend herself in public and reveals at the same time her affect towards the incident (cf. Kotthoff 2002: 208). She then changes the topic and refers to language use in public transportation, in order to project a similar image of herself as bold and powerful. Both the critique from the person who does not want her to speak her language and her reaction are reproduced in English. This dialogue is followed by a verbal attack reproduced in Greek, where the Greek person tells her to leave and go to her country.

This verbal attack bears similarities with the one C. (1) includes in her narrative. D. uses the verb *leave* in combination with a locative as well (cf. Stokoe and Edwars 2007) and makes a series of grammatical mistakes (a preposition is missing and she makes a mistake in gender assignment to the noun *patrida* 'home country'). Moreover, on the lexical level, a speaker of

[96] According to Vincent and Perrin (1999), the support function of reported speech relates it to a supported statement. "One aspect of the relationship results from the metadiscursive character of the supported statement, which refers to a category of speech act or verbal behaviour into which the reported speech fits" (Vincent and Perrin 1999: 298). This analysis applies to excerpt (3), where D. reproduces speech to support her claim concerning the staff's unwillingness to communicate, as well as excerpt (1), where the reported speech illustrates the speaker's opinion of the people who performed the verbal attack.

Greek would use the verb *πήγαινε* 'go' instead of the verb *φύγε* 'leave' when followed by a prepositional phrase denoting direction. Consequently, similar to (1), this utterance is reconstructed in retrospect by the speaker who wants to illustrate her claim. Both incidents of verbal abuse can be attributed a "reality-constituting status" (Stokoe and Edwards 2007: 357), as they are intended to exclude the recipients from possible membership in a national group. This implied act of exclusion is directly related to power and segregation, constituting an instance of what has been called "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995).

D.'s different reactions at different points of her story can be attributed to the changing context. While in an institutional setting she presents a non-agentive self and grants voice only to her interlocutors, when insulted in public space, she reproduces both the verbal attack and her reaction. This change in perspective according to shifting power relations is probably characteristic for the general population as well. However, its manifestation in the narrative of D. can be attributed not only to the aforementioned general tendency but also to the characteristics of the minority group she belongs to. While in offices D. is interacting with the state and is, therefore, lacking agency, being oppressed in various ways (a migrant woman, lacking legal documents, in possession of only limited linguistic skills), when experiencing racism by random people in public spaces, she presents herself as strong and bold, claiming her right to exist in her country of residence. At the same time, by quoting the insulting remarks of her interlocutors and ascribing them certain thoughts and feelings, she constructs interiority and exposes them as racist through their own words (Mildorf 2008: 297). D. herself does not comment on this behavior and the audience is called to come to its own conclusions based on the quoted utterances.

Alongside this analysis, a second interpretation of D.'s changing self-presentation can be provided, based on the assumption that the narrative is a co-construction between speaker and audience. In the beginning, when facing public institutions, D. remains silent, and the researcher does not ask any explicit questions on her reaction. However, when she describes the second incident, the researcher openly asks her how she reacted to the racist remarks she quotes (*Like that? Openly? (...) And what do you do?*). These questions can be interpreted as an invitation to present an active self. The researcher indicates that she is shocked by the offence and her question regarding D.'s reaction is answered with a relatively long stretch of talk, where D. reconstructs a series of utterances. Her words can be interpreted as a construction, in retrospect, of an image of herself which would correspond to the expectations of the researcher, a co-construction of those involved in communication. When quoting the next racist remark, D.

provides her reaction straight away, not waiting for the researcher to ask her on the topic. She has, therefore, aligned to the image of herself as active and strong when facing injustice, an image the researcher has indicated her approval of. The direct speech of D. might, therefore, be hypothetical; it might correspond to what she would like to say in this kind of setting and what she thinks the researcher would approve of her saying. This reaction can, therefore, be interpreted as a negotiation of her relationship with the interviewer (De Fina and Perrino 2011: 7).[98] My experience of D., on the whole, supports this analysis, as it is hard to imagine that she would answer in the open, almost aggressive way she quotes, taking into consideration her character and her difficulties to communicate due to her limited knowledge of Greek, a point she repeatedly stresses in the course of the interview.

The incidents analysed so far constitute examples of racist verbal abuse experienced by the narrators. Many women have found themselves in similar situations and have reproduced them in their narratives using direct speech to quote the words of the offenders. In the following example, G. recounts a similar experience of her daughter in her school environment:

(4)

R: And the kids (.) did they ever have problems at school?

G: Hm: it's only my first daughter. But it's not serious problem it's only children problem.

R: With other children or with teachers?

G: No not teachers. When she ente:r nipio ((Greek for 'preschool')) (.) they used to sing for her it's the only black child there (.) in the class (.) they will be singing mavro mavro mavro mavro ((Greek for 'black, black, black, black')) ((she sings a melody)) and when they come back they used to ask me why is our colour different from others? (.) that is the ONLY problem that she have.

In this example, the use of direct speech supports the lively description of the daughter's experience. G. does not only quote the words of the other children; she even reproduces the melody of the 'song' they were singing in order to single her daughter out as black. Another reproduction must have taken place, when the daughter came home from school and quoted this

[98] Rapley (2001) claims that interview data can be regarded either as "resource" or as "topic". According to the first approach, "the interview data collected are seen as (more or less) reflecting the interviewees' reality outside the interview," while in the second one, "the interview data collected are seen as (more or less) reflecting a reality jointly constructed by the interviewee and interviewer" (Rapley 2001: 304).

song to her mother. Similar to excerpts (1) and (3), this example features a grammatical mistake as well, as G. uses the neuter form of the adjective instead of the feminine, which would be grammatically correct in Greek. This mistake reflects the constructed nature of the reproduction, as it is very improbable that this mistake was made by her daughter who attends a Greek school and speaks the language well. After this incident, the daughter is given voice and addresses the mother asking her why their colour is different from other people. While in the examples analysed so far the women reacted to racist insults, in this excerpt G. seems to downplay the incident and classify it as a child's problem with other children, stressing that this is the only problem her daughter ever faced at school. By adopting this perspective, she positions her child as cooperative and successful in her school environment, not facing problems with teachers and only experiencing minor conflicts with children. However, the reproduction of her daughter's question concerning their skin colour, can be seen as a covert evaluation. Neither the daughter nor the mother comment on the child's experience; the experience is evaluated through the daughter's question, which transmits her emotions at the time of the event. The girl is shown wondering and the mother refrains from commenting while the audience is made aware of the character's feelings through the mother's words.

Interestingly, similar to the examples analysed so far, G. shifts to Greek in order to reproduce racist remarks which were uttered in Greek. This seems to be a pattern when women with limited knowledge of Greek, who narrate in English, want to include racist remarks in their narratives. This decision might be motivated by their will to make the incident more credible. Shifting to Greek when using direct speech is, therefore, a tactical move. Keeping in mind that most of these incidents are not remembered the exact way they took place but are, rather, reproduced in retrospect, this language shift constitutes a stylistic choice, adding to the credibility of the narrative. While Alvarez-Caccamo (1996: 54) has argued that the language in which a speaker reports the words of another is often not the language in which the other spoke, the data so far seem to show the opposite pattern and the women make an effort not to perform a so-called "code displacement". At the same time, these switches can be analysed as proof of language competence. Even if they are not fluent in Greek, the narrators possess the knowledge necessary to decipher and reproduce the words of their interlocutors in the story world. By including this ability in their stories, they present themselves as active and claim the ability to react, which they would be deprived of if they were unable to understand their interlocutors.

This presentation of the self as knowledgeable is largely motivated by the participants' environment. When telling their stories, the women are communicating with a person who is

teaching Greek to groups of migrants. Her positive assessment of language competence is, therefore, given. Consequently, these narratives can be read relationally; they are emerging in interaction and constitute a form of social practice and the outcome of (unspoken) negotiations between those taking part in communication (cf. De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008).

The following excerpt does not include instances of direct verbal abuse. However, it belongs to the category of racist experiences, as the narrator is confronted with racist comments in the form of stereotypes.

(5)

K: So when you ask me in Africa they say you are living with animals you don't have house::s you don't have this (.) I say den ine etsi ((Greek for 'it is not like that')) E TI DEN INE ETSI ETSI INE ((Greek for 'what do you mean it is not like that it is like that') ((very loud voice)) and I say da::ksi ((Greek for 'oka::y')) ((resigned tone)) just because (.) she never travel she stay she never went she never went to airport (.) she is afraid of plane so I understand ok da::ksi ((Greek for 'oka::y')) (xxx) because IF she tra:vel to see that is not because most of the time they show Africa some place there is anima:ls and the people li:ve in there so she believe sometimes they show in Skai or Star[99] or any station they show in Africa some village like they live like KENYA people living there with anima:ls or like Sudan (.) so she believe a:::l the continent is LIKE THAT (.) she doesn't believe there is CITY there is this so when she say I say edaksi giagia oti pis ((Greek for 'ok grandma whatever you say')) OXI OTI PIS ((Greek for 'not whatever you say)) ((imitating the woman shouting)) I say da:::ksi ti thelis na kano? ((Greek for 'oka:::y what do you want me to do?')).

Based on Bamberg's (1997) positioning model, this excerpt can be analysed as follows: At level one, the characters interacting are K. and the old woman ('grandmother') she works for as live-in domestic help. The excerpt starts with the old woman's words, stating that there are no houses in Africa. People there are living together with animals, she claims. The woman's reported speech constitutes an instance of fact construction (Potter 1996). K. contests this comment by claiming that this is not the case. The woman insists on her views and K. backs off. However, as K. does not seem convinced, the old woman again insists on her opinions using a loud voice. She is not content with K.'s resignation, she, seemingly, wants to convince her of her views on

[99] *Skai* and *Star* are two popular private Greek TV channels.

Africa, the continent her Ghanaian domestic help comes from. At this first level of analysis, the old woman is presented as intense, almost aggressive, while K. avoids conflict. Consequently, the old woman is in possession of power, neither willing nor forced to accept her interlocutors' views, while K. is found in the position of the one who has to adapt and is, therefore, weak.

A closer look at the overall structure of the narrative, however, challenges this analysis. After quoting the old woman's views, K. offers a list of explanations on the reasons she has formed these stereotypical images of Africa. These explanations serve to prevent K. from getting emotionally involved when confronted with derogatory comments, as her interlocutor's statements are attributed to her lack of knowledge and to the stereotypical images of Africa circulating in Greek media. Interestingly, K. does not refute these images by contesting their validity but rather by geographically distancing herself from the countries where people might indeed live together with animals, like for example some places in Kenya or Sudan, as she claims. Her argumentation is based on the fact that Africa is not a country, a uniform place, but a continent made up by countries which differ significantly from one another. This rational analysis of what could be perceived as offensive, creates a space where K. can adapt to her interlocutor's views while still protecting her identity. On the third, social level of analysis, she constructs herself as a strong, intelligent woman, who knows when to avoid conflict and is able to adapt to her interlocutor. In contrast to the old woman, who is racist because of her ignorance, she herself has travelled and knows better. The image of the weak migrant is, therefore, turned on its head. Respect for older people, a value mentioned by many women regardless of the situation, is expected to have influenced K.'s narrative.

Intonation plays an important role in this excerpt and supports the analysis offered so far. When quoting her interlocutor's statements, K. shifts prosody. While she herself speaks in a calm and steady tone, her interlocutor gets excited and raises her voice; her speech is reproduced as almost shrieking. Intonation has been described as a window on consciousness (Chafe 1993: 39) while being, at the same time, a context-sensitive contextualization cue (Tannen 1993) signaling either involvement or power negotiation (Archakis and Papazachariou 2008). Similar to the findings of Holt (2000), according to which speakers who want to present a move as offensive use prosody to support their claim, K. changes her voice quality in order to evaluate a reaction. The old woman's reproduced prosody is, in other words, a form of assessment through exaggeration (Buttny 1997: 501). This stylization of her interlocutor's irritation, combined with the absurdity of her claims, undermines her words (cf. Mildorf 2008: 291). Consequently, K. expresses an almost condescending attitude towards the woman's opinions,

which is communicated through exaggerated prosody, among other devices. At the same time, the audience creates a certain image of the old woman, while K. refrains from any open assessment.

In all incidents analysed so far the women are not portrayed as initiating interaction but rather as reacting to other people's words. This image can be attributed to the nature of this category of narratives. Verbal racist attacks constitute instances of aggression and the women are expected to find themselves in a position of defense. However, contrary to the findings of De Fina (2003b), the examples of direct speech in this dataset do not include a large number of thoughts or emotions; they consist mainly of words spoken or constructed in retrospect as spoken. Consequently, when verbally attacked, the narrators present themselves as speaking up. In the majority of the episodes, they reconstruct incidents where they were not alone; other family members were targeted by the racist remarks as well. By including other people in the episodes they reconstruct and giving them voice, "a network of social relationships comes into play" (Baynham and Slembrouck 1999), while their experiences of racism are presented as collective, and the tellability (Polanyi 1985) of the event is, therefore, increased. At the same time, the narrators' decision to use direct speech signals that they classify these experiences as "noteworthy or remarkable, thus merit[ing] this marked form of representation" (Mildorf 2008: 290). By dramatizing them, they give them the quality of a performance, which takes place in front of an audience, which is called to react. The researcher's solidarity is, therefore, evoked. The question concerning the authenticity of the reported utterances is not relevant in this context. At the same time, direct speech is used as an evaluation of the characters' attitudes, while the narrators refrain from any explicit comment and claim the role of an objective observer. Direct speech is, consequently, used as a narrative strategy when the women describe the verbal racist attacks they face and is closely related to the construction of certain forms of identities in the course of the participants' interaction with the researcher.

6.3.2. Language competence

Besides verbal racist attacks, direct reported speech is used when the participants refer to language-related experiences. In the first example, B., a 25-year old woman from Nigeria who moved to the city of Giannena[100] together with her family at the age of 16, recounts the

[100] Giannena is a city in the North of Greece with a population of approximately 170.000. The city's migrant population is very small. According to B., the largest groups of foreigners living in Giannena come from

difficulties she faced when she first attended a Greek school because of her lack of knowledge of Greek.

(6)

Μια φορά που μίλησα πρώτη φορά (.) >η πρώτη μου επαφή για να μιλήσω στο σχολείο ήτανε:< κάναμε μαθήματα μαθηματικών (.) εγώ όμως στη Νιγηρία είχα δώσει πανελλήνιες στη Νιγηρία δηλαδή έχω δώσει το West African Examination για να πάω πανεπιστήμιο να κερδίσω δύο χρό::νια (...) >Και τελοσπάντων< το μάθημα: το 'χα κάνει: Α΄Λυκείου αυτό το μάθημα (.) οι ασκήσεις (.) καταλάβαινα δηλαδή τι συμβαίνει στα μαθηματικά και αυτό ο μαθηματικός ήθελε κάποιος να λύσει την άσκηση και κανένας δε σηκωνόταν και (.) επειδή μιλούσα με τον Αλέξανδρο και (.) (xxx) λύνω ασκήσεις και μου λέει αφού το ξέρεις σήκω πάνω και λύστη (.) και ήμουνα φάση ο καθηγητής δεν μου μιλάει (.) τι εννοείς σήκω πάνω και λύστη; Και μου λέει έλα σή:κω αφού μπορείς να τη λύσεις. Και σηκώνω το χέρι μου και μου είπε ο δάσκαλος να το λύσω και μετά μου λέει χα (.) καταλαβαίνεις; ((έκπληκτος)) και ήμουν στη φάση δεν είμαι ΤΟΥΒΛΟ δηλαδή ΕΛΕΟΣ και από τότε: αυτός άρχισε και μου μιλάει αυτός ο δάσκαλος μου μιλάει και: μου λέει άμα χρειαστείς βοήθεια: >να σε βοηθήσω σε κάτι< και του λέω (.) >απλά δεν καταλαβαίνω όταν μιλάτε αλλά μπορώ να λύσω ασκήσεις< δηλαδή είναι ΠΟΛΥ εύκολο να λύσω ασκήσεις.

(Once I spoke for the first time (.) >my first contact to speak at school wa:s< we were having math class (.) but in Nigeria I had taken part in the high school entrance exam I mean I had participated in the West African Examination to go to university to skip two yea::rs (...) >And anyway< the lesso:n I had do:ne it at the first year of high school this lesson (.) the exercises (.) I mean I understood what was going on in math and this math teacher wanted someone to write the answer and nobody stood up and (.) because I was speaking with Alexandros and (.) (xxx) to solve the exercise and he tells me since you know it get up and write the answer (.) and I was like the teacher is not talking to me (.) what do you mean get up and write the answer? And he tells me come on get u:p since you know the answer. And I raise my hand and the teacher told me to write the answer and then he tells me ha (.) you understand? ((surprised)) and I was like I am not STUPID I mean COME ON and since the:n he started talking to me and this teacher is talking

neighboring Albania. Some Chinese are also mentioned, while her sister and herself were the only African children attending her school at that time.

to me a:nd he tells me if you need he:lp >to help you with something< and I tell him (.) >it's just that I don't understand when you are speaking but I can answer the exercises< I mean it is VERY easy to answer the exercises.)

This excerpt involves three characters, B., her classmate Alexandros and the math teacher. B. presents the interaction in the form of an animated conversation characterised by immediacy and directness. The dramatisation of the incident is supported by the representation of several turns of the original speech event, evoking the impression of a natural and authentic reproduction (Lampropoulou 2011). B. grants speaking rights to all three characters involved in the story; however, the agentive roles they assume differ. While Alexandros issues two directives, repeatedly encouraging B. to raise her hand, B. first reacts with an expressive in the form of a covert evaluation (*the teacher is not talking to me (.) what do you mean get up and write the answer?)*; she claims that the teacher does not speak with her, therefore there is no use in providing an answer. This statement depicts her feeling of discrimination. After Alexandros' second encouragement, B. is persuaded to raise her hand. The teacher's permission to provide an answer is reproduced in indirect speech. B. switches again to direct speech when the teacher expresses an evaluation, stating that he is surprised by her knowledge. This change from indirect to direct speech can be attributed to the content of the utterance. While a teacher urging a student to stand up and answer a question does not bear any special significance and does not belong to the focus of B.'s telling (cf. Holt 2017), his reaction to her knowledge is central to her story; it adds to the overall argument of her narrative and is, therefore, reported in direct speech. An expressive of B., in the form of an evaluation (*I am not STUPID I mean COME ON*), follows. This utterance represents a thought, "a silent reaction to a co-conversationalist's reported turn-at-talk" (Haakana 2006: 151). It was never uttered this way, as this would violate classroom rules and respect. In this part a prosodic shift takes place: the overall pitch of the sentence is higher and B. stresses the words *stupid* and *come on.* By changing the prosody, she transmits her affective attitude (cf. Chafe 2002; Günther 1997) and depicts herself as insulted and discriminated against.

After B.'s internal reaction, the picture changes. The teacher who was, so far, ignoring her, now issues a commissive in the form of an offer, urging her to address him if she needs any help. This offer is, at the same time, an expression of his acknowledgement of her abilities and his willingness to support her. However, any offer is also an expression of power, as the one who is offering help is in possession of something the other might need (cf. De Fina 2003b: 135). In this part of the incident, the teacher is presented as stronger than B., possessing the

power to grant her access to knowledge. B. keeps the last words for herself and provides, again in direct speech, an assertive in the form of a statement; she tells the teacher that her problem is not a mathematical one. Her difficulties are related to language, as she does not understand him in class. While all characters so far expressed directives, offers and/or evaluations, B. keeps the only statement for herself. She stresses, that as far as mathematics are concerned, she finds the exercises very easy and does not accept the teacher's help, as she has already covered this part of the syllabus in her country of origin. Through this utterance B. presents herself as strong and intelligent. As she arrived in Greece only a few months before the incident, she does not speak Greek. She only needs more time to learn the language. The image of a skilful woman, who is trying to adapt to her new environment while faced with negative attitudes, lack of understanding and discrimination, is projected.

The presence of the researcher could have influenced the identity B. constructs in this episode. According to Rae and Kerby (2007: 192), "formulations in talk are situated in the sense that they are delivered in specific contexts to audiences for whom they are designed". The interviewer's characteristics and her position as a researcher could, therefore, have influenced the projection of B.'s identity as educated. The reporting choices she makes are, in other words, not subject to the rules of authenticity. They are selected as part of her construction for a specific audience, formed by the local context of the interaction (Lampropoulou 2011: 3383). Moreover, apart from the researchers' presence, B.'s family background and the wider social context she grew up in are expected to have shaped her narrative. B. comes from an educated family. Her father was working at a University in Nigeria and her mother holds a graduate degree. Consequently, she grew up in an environment valuing academic performance. The description of her school success before the family moved to Greece, stating that she had passed an exam[101] allowing her to skip some years and go straight to university, supports this claim. Consequently, her family background and the social values she grew up with, together with the presence of the researcher, are all factored in the image B. constructs for herself in this episode.

The following excerpt also deals with the narrator's lack of knowledge of Greek, while focusing on its negative impact in the context of work:

[101] When referring to her high school entrance exam in Nigeria, B. uses the word which describes the equivalent exam in Greece (πανελλήνιες). By merging a Greek exam with her country of origin she projects a hybrid identity and creates the image of a person who belongs at the same time to two distinct worlds, which are, however, not separated from each other.

(7)

F: You see sometimes the-the-the-the they brought in some sheets (.) and (.) everything I want to rea:d sometimes these people everybody will sign will sign will sign but (.) I (.) I (.) said maybe it was like e:h (.) we are signing something that we have not collected but we are signing so I will question them HOW this? and they begin to speak >blahblahblahblahblahblah< I don't understand (xxx) so you see it's because of the language I just eh (.) I just also sign.

R: So the other women they also sign?

F: They ALL sign. Sometimes I (xxx) aware that why is we are signing this? It's adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')) (.) ADIA ((Greek for 'paid leave)) (.) we have not gone to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')), but we are signing paper for them that we have gone to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')).

R: What adia ((Greek for 'permit'))? Adia paramonis ((Greek for 'residence permit'))?

F: No the holidays. So (.) they'll sign (.) a:nd if I question them everybody will say blahblahblahblah yes you should si:gn so we are we are going to collect the money if we don't sign that's all they won't give us.

In this excerpt, F. recounts an experience of exploitation because of lacking linguistic skills. According to her narrative, before they paid them, the company she worked for (as cleaning staff) used to ask them to sign some papers. A conflict arises, as the staff was unable to understand the content of the documents. In the beginning, F. reports a question she addresses to the people who gave them these papers (*How this?*). The answer she receives is reported as undecipherable blabber in the form of the onomatopoeic *blahblahblahblah*. The use of this derogatory form underlines the company's unwillingness to cooperate. When the researcher asks F. about the reaction of her co-workers, she states that they all signed. She, then, reproduces a dialogue, where she is questioning them on whether they should sign. F.'s basic knowledge of Greek allows her to understand that they were asked to falsely confirm they made use of paid leave. By reproducing her question concerning the legitimacy of the company's demand, F. presents herself as knowledgeable, able to decipher the content of the document, and bold, willing to question her employers. In this part of the incident, the boundaries between F.'s reported speech and what could be perceived as an explanatory comment are unclear. While the first part is addressed to her co-workers (*why is we are signing this?*) what follows (*we have*

not gone to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave')), but we are signing paper for them that we have gone to adia ((Greek for 'paid leave'))) is better understood as a comment by way of clarifying the situation to the researcher. This merging of alleged reported speech and comment underlines the fact that the dialogue is constructed, in retrospect, for a specific audience (cf. Mildorf 2008: 294).

While F. presents herself as strong and courageous, her co-workers' reported speech depicts them as compliant and weak. Similar to the employers' answer, their words are reproduced with the derogatory onomatopoeic *blahblahblahblah* as well, implying a lack of arguments. The decision to sign is based, according to their own words, on their fear that they might, otherwise, not be given their salary. Apart from blabber, the use of the pronoun *we* can be seen as an additional indication of lacking authenticity. The element of chorality has already been analysed in excerpt (1) in relation to issuing a threat. In this example, the views of F.'s colleagues are presented as spoken simultaneously by all members of the group. However, in reality, these words would have been uttered by one person only. This use of chorality is a narrative strategy used by F. While her co-workers share the fear that they might lose their money and are, therefore, willing to sign, she stresses her boldness, as she is the only one questioning their employer. However, the ending of the narrative highlights "the role of the group as the main agentive unit in the story world" (De Fina 2003b: 136). The opinions shared collectively are stronger than F.'s individual concerns for justice, and the documents are signed by everyone.

In the two examples of this category analysed so far, the women claim a positive identity for themselves by reconstructing interactions which took place in the past and reproducing their own words alongside the utterances of their interlocutors. In the following excerpt, M. constructs a positive image of herself as well, however the reported speech is largely hypothetical; it consists mainly of internal thoughts instead of words spoken, as her limited knowledge of Greek prevents her from expressing herself publicly:

(8)

M: There was a time e:h my husband got arrested (.) because of his document when his document have (.) problem so the police they say e:h gia to charti ((Greek 'for the paper')) so: he was trying to explain to them that e:h his document so (.) befo:re we could know it they had cuff him (.) and (.) took him to:: their station (.) then I was pregnant (.) so I wanted to say (.) what what do you people mean? don't you have regard fo:r the BABY don't you have regard for his WIFE (.) even if he don't have document

he didn't commit anything you people should have wa:rned him ah I felt so bad I wanted oh I wish I speak I could have (.) I could have said something that would really touch them because sometimes when you speak English sometimes they don't even want to LISTEN. In the station I was looking at the man who was writing something the policeman that was writing something at the desk so I wanted to tell him (.) ask him if he is married (.) if his wife has ever ever been pregnant (.) if he has children I wanted to ask him some questions to know how he feels because (.) he showed no remorse (.) he showed no remorse. I felt bad I said if only I know how to speak Greek it maybe would have been better.

R: But you also did not have documents?

M: Yes I did not have but I am not afraid because it is only him (.) they didn't control me.[102] *But they KNEW I have no document so they said if I say more they will put me in jail ((laughs)) they said they will put me in jail >I said I don't care< put me in jail with this baby (.) you are not serious (.) but I didn't want to talk more (.) so I just left there. He stayed there for a week or so.*

In this excerpt, M. recounts her experience with the police when her husband was arrested. The words of the policeman are reproduced in Greek (*gia to charti* 'for the paper'), the language they were uttered in, while the rest of the narrative takes place in English. This language switch renders the reported utterance credible. After her husband was cuffed, M. reproduces a stretch of hypothetical speech where she presents herself as bold, questioning the policeman's decision to arrest a person who did not commit any crime, solely on the basis of his legal status. Respect for the baby and for the arrested man's wife are used as additional arguments, while she does not hesitate to indicate to her interlocutor the way he should have reacted. This hypothetical speech is introduced with the expression *I wanted to say*, stressing M.'s intention to support her husband as well as her inability to do so because of her insufficient knowledge of Greek. This image of M. as bold and daring to question an authority figure is in contrast with the findings of Lampropoulou (2011: 3380), according to which, in instances of direct reported speech, female speakers focus on so-called "rapport enhancement strategies", avoiding challenge and excluding their voices from disagreements. Adopting challenge is, she claims, a male

[102] The influence of gender on police controls is recurrent in many interviews; it appears that only the male African population of Athens is subject to random police controls. As far as the women are concerned, even the ones who do not possess legal documents, like for example M., state that they are not afraid to move around on the streets, especially during the day, as long as they dress normally. They claim that only prostitutes are subject to random controls. This differential treatment of male and female population and the protection a female identity seems to grant is used as one of the arguments in favour of Greece compared to other European countries.

characteristic (Lampropoulou 2011: 3381). Similar to the previous excerpt, where F. questioned her employers' demands, M. seems to adopt what has been described as a typical male perspective by positioning herself as tough-talking and courageous. Gender stereotypes, relating toughness with manhood and weakness with femininity (cf. Coates 2003) are, therefore, turned around, while a form of sexism performed by Greek police seems to be working in favour of the women.

However, these words were never uttered the way they are reported. They constitute M.'s thoughts and are included in her narrative as hypothetical reported speech. Their deciphering presupposes two kinds of shifts by the listener, who recognizes that the discourse is not only represented but also hypothetical (Myers 1999). Among other functions, hypothetical reported speech has been found to occur when speakers want to generalise their views (Koster and Handford 2018) or model possible responses when illustrating a claim (Myers 1999; Golato 2012). In this episode, M. uses hypothetical reported speech as a form of support for her argumentation, during a process of "claim-backing", as she provides "explanations to warrant the truth of what has been said" (Antaki and Leudar 1990: 279). Although M. argues that only language competence prevented her from reacting the way she wanted, it remains open whether she would utter the words the way she reproduces them as internal thoughts if she was in possession of the necessary linguistic skills.

After this long, hypothetical interaction, M. switches to indirect speech. Her sentences are introduced with the conjunction *if* and consist of a series of questions she would like to address to the policeman who is sitting at his desk. Similar to the hypothetical direct speech analysed so far, these utterances question the policeman's authority and evaluate his decisions. Finally, towards the end of her story, she quotes herself interacting with the policeman (*I don't care< put me in jail with this baby (.) you are not serious)*. While all words reconstructed so far are reproduced as hypothetical speech, the last sentence, a reaction to the threat of incarceration, is introduced with the verb *say* and is, therefore, claimed to be a direct representation of words spoken. The image of herself created in the hypothetical discourse, as bold and tough-talking, is confirmed through this last utterance. However, this reaction is lacking authenticity. According to M., the policeman issued a threat as a result of what she told him so far (*they said if I say more they will put me in jail*). This claim ignores the fact that all utterances included in the narrative until now are hypothetical; the policeman is unable to react to them, as he is unaware of them. His reaction to hypothetical reported speech stands as proof of the constructed nature of the episode. M. includes thoughts and words and mixes them in her

narrative in order to illustrate her claims and project a certain identity. Through her narrative she evaluates the policeman's decisions, which stand for similar decisions made on other occasions. Authenticity notwithstanding, the listener is guided to M.'s feelings through the reproduced interaction (cf. De Fina 2003b: 105), and comes to conclusions concerning the rightness of her positions in the story world.

Language competence plays an important role in the following excerpt as well. However, while in the incidents analysed so far the narrators spoke English and found themselves disempowered because of their lacking knowledge of Greek, in this excerpt K. reconstructs a dialogue with her former employer which took place in Greek. Her knowledge of the language is used as an additional argument to stress her claims.

(9)

Και αυτή είπα θα στείλει το παιδί σου τώρα (.) ε: εγώ το βρήκα άλλη δουλειά για σένα τρεις φορές και δικό μου δύο φορές και αυτά >και εγώ σου είπα όχι< (.) εγώ δεν θέλεις δουλειά έτσι κι από δω κι από δω εγώ θέλεις δουλειά ε:: κάθε μέ:ρα και να είναι μέσα δεν με νοιάζει (.) και πάλι να πληρώνει ΙΚΑ (.) εσύ δεν πληρώνει ΙΚΑ. (...) Τώρα εγώ μιλάει ελληνικά σιγά σιγά τώρα μπορώ να βρω δουλειά 800 μαζί το ΙΚΑ μπορώ να βρω δουλειά 900 μαζί το ΙΚΑ κι εσύ δεν πληρώνει ΙΚΑ δεν μπορώ τώρα είναι πολύ δύσκολο αν δεν πληρώνει ΙΚΑ κι εγώ κάνει άρρωστη τι να κάνω; Δεν είναι σαν το πριν τώρα πράγματα αλλάζει. Εντά::ξει ((μιμείται τον τόνο)) και μιλάω το Βασίλη κι εγώ σου είπα ΑΣΕ το Βασίλη άντε Γιωργία ΑΣΕ το Βασίλη τώρα >εσύ μπορεί να πει τίποτα και ο Βασίλη να ακούσει σε σένα< ΑΝΤΕ ΤΩΡΑ ΓΙΩΡΓΙΑ ((αποδοκιμασία)) (.) ντά::ξει ((απολογητικό ύφος)) και τώρα δεν ξέρω αν βρήκε κάποιο έτσι αλλά το παιδί κλαίει κάθε μέρα τη Κ. μου (.) μαμά:: που είναι τη Κ. μου; ((μιμείται τον τόνο))

(And she said you send your child now (.) e:h I found another job for you three times and mine two times and that >and I told you no< (.) I don't want work like that here and there I want work e::h every da:y and if it's inside I don't care (.) but again to pay IKA ((Greek for 'social security)) you don't pay IKA. ((Greek for 'social security)) (...) Now I speak Greek and step by step now I can find work 800 with IKA I can find work 900 with IKA and you don't pay IKA ((Greek for 'social security)) I can't now it's very hard if you don't pay IKA ((Greek for 'social security)) and I am sick what will I do? Now it's not like before now things change. Oka::y ((imitates the tone)) and I speak with Vasili and I tell you and I say LEAVE Vasili out of it come on Giorgia LEAVE Vasili

now >you can say anything and Vasili will listen to you< COME ON GIORGIA ((disapprovingly)) oka::y ((apologizingly)) and now I don't know if she found someone else like that but the child is crying every day my K. mu::m where is my K.? (imitating the child's voice))

In this excerpt, K., who has been living in Greece for 10 years and speaks the language fluently, reproduces a dialogue with her employer. K.'s speaking tone, her fast reproduction of the incident, her imitation of voices and her overall fluency, gives her utterances the effect of lines in a drama (cf. Tannen 1989: 124). The characters involved in the story are K. and Giorgia. At the time of the interaction K. has been working for a period of approximately three years as domestic help at Giorgia's house, taking care of the household and of Giorgia's daughter. In the dialogue, the two women discuss the continuation of their collaboration. Giorgia, who does not need K. to come to her house every day anymore, tells her that she has found another household where she can work three times a week, while she can continue working at her place the remaining two days. K. does not accept the offer. She wants to find employment in a household where she can work every day and, more importantly, she wants to have social security. Now, that she speaks Greek, she is able to find a better job, she claims. When Giorgia answers that she will discuss the topic with her husband, Vasilis, K. does not take the offer in a positive way. She tells Giorgia to leave the husband out of it, as she knows that Giorgia can convince him of everything. It is, therefore, a matter of Giorgia's decision and not one made by the husband. In the end, she reproduces the child's words, repeatedly asking the mother where K. is.

In the context of her interaction with Giorgia (level 1 of positioning) K. presents herself as strong. She is now in possession of a skill that will allow her to work under better conditions and uses this argument to enhance her discursive position. At the same time, she does not conform to the typical image of domestic help. While Giorgia is conciliatory and offers alternatives, K. first communicates statements and decisions, and then moves on to instructions, speaking in a serious and emphatic voice. She is, in other words, turning around the image of an employee who follows her employer's instructions. When Giorgia answers that she will discuss K.'s demands with her husband, K. raises her voice and assesses Giorgia's words morally (cf. Relaño Pastor 2014: 78). The content of the utterance, together with its marked prosody, reflect K.'s power, while Giorgia's words are reproduced in an apologetic tone. K.'s mimicking of Giorgia's voice through exaggerated prosody makes a parody out of Giorgia's utterances. This strategy of mocking an interlocutor for his/her words is used by speakers who

want to evaluate the other in a negative way (Buttny and Williams 2000: 109). K. does not consider Giorgia's answer sincere and, therefore, uses exaggerated prosody to reproduce it in the form of mockery.

This excerpt presents K. as indispensable to Giorgia. The position she holds in Giorgia's household is supported by the represented speech of the child, who repeatedly asks the mother on the whereabouts of *her* K., stressing her emotional connection with her babysitter through the use of the possessive pronoun. The imitation of the child's wining tone further illustrates this claim. It remains unclear how K. knows about the child's reaction to her absence. This part of the dialogue is probably constructed and used as an additional argument supporting K.'s power over Giorgia. Finally, Giorgia is presented as stronger than her husband, as the decisions of the couple depend on her intentions. The image of the powerful, tough talking male (Coates 2003) who decides on family matters, is turned around and Giorgia is presented as the head of the household as far as decision-making is concerned.[103]

On level 3 of positioning, in the wider social context, K. claims the role of a strong and independent migrant woman who is aware of her abilities and willing to fight for a better future. In this context, it must be mentioned that K. is a victim of trafficking; she comes from a very poor region in the north of Ghana and was sold as a bride to a Ghanaian man at the age of nine. Her journey of migration is filled with pain and her first years in Greece were very hard. The identity she projects is, therefore, related to a story of hardship which, however, led to personal empowerment, success and pride. This image of herself on the broader, social level defines her identity when interacting with the researcher and results in her claims for power through the reproduction of reported utterances.

While in the examples analysed so far the women reconstructed their words as part of dialogues, in the following two excerpts they present themselves exclusively through other people's statements. In the first example, A. recounts her experience at a police station. This sentence is part of a longer narrative on the complicated bureaucratic procedures she has to go through:

[103] The dependence of household decisions on factors like income, education, and the power balance between husband and wife have been studied by researchers from various backgrounds (i.e. economics, sociology, development studies). Although some studies have claimed that an increasing level of education, together with employment, results in female empowerment, the wider social context has been found to define, in the end, the woman's position inside the household (i.e. Basu 2006; Quisumbing 2003; Mader and Schneebaum 2013), making existent structures rigid and hard to change.

(10)

Α: Πήγαμε για τα χαρτιά (.) για το διαβατήριο και την κάρτα.

R: Και για πες.

Α: Και πήγαμε (.) >και πήγαμε να δώσουμε τη φωτογραφία< αυτές είναι οι φωτογραφίες.

R: Να τα δω;

Α: Ναι δες τα (.) εγώ: με το παιδί και όλα (.) και εδώσαμε (.) και εκείνος το αστυνομικός ήταν κούκλος και αυτός ξέρεις τι μου λέει; <u>Δεν έχω δει κανένα μαύρη κοπέλα να μιλάει ελληνικά σαν εσένα.</u>

(A: And we went for the papers (.) for the passport and the card.

R: And? Tell me.

A: And we went (.) >and we went to give the picture< these are the pictures.

R: Can I look at them?

A: Yes look at them (.) me: with the child and everything (.) and we gave (.) and this policeman was a doll and you know what he tells me? <u>I have not seen any black girl speak Greek like you.</u>)

In this excerpt, A. reproduces the utterance of the policeman telling her that she speaks Greek better than any other black woman he has met. This utterance is introduced with a rhetorical question *(you know what he tells me?)*, a structure used as an assertion of the tellability of what will follow rather than a request for information (Koshik 2005). A. includes it in her narrative in order to put forward a standpoint and stress the information which is going to follow (Snoeck Henkemans 2009). The setting of the focus on the policeman's words and the presentation of A. not simply as a competent speaker of Greek but as an exceptional case, standing out from all other members of the group she belongs to, creates the image of a woman who has accomplished something extraordinary. On the broader social level, A. presents herself as successful and integrated. Although she cannot read and write and faces unemployment and hardship, she has managed to learn Greek and impress an authority figure at that. By introducing the policeman, this judgement is presented as unquestionable. Moreover, as authority figures are usually not considered supportive towards migrants, the policeman's praise stresses the fact that A.'s knowledge is an exceptional accomplishment she should be proud of. The additional information on the policeman's good looks support the value of his argument by shedding an

overall positive light on his person. It can, moreover, be analysed as a result of the researcher's presence, a young woman who might be interested in the looks of men. This detail can, therefore, be interpreted as an example of co-construction between interviewer and interviewee, as the latter aims at creating a narrative that will interest and convince the former.

In a similar excerpt, K. reconstructs an utterance where she is praised for her language competence:

(11)

If I go any house for job (.) and they see that I speak Greek they are very impressed (.) they say BRAVO ((Greek for 'well done')) IF all people can learn black can learn how to speak Greek like this we don't have pro:blem (.) VERY impressed.

In this excerpt, the reproduction of direct speech supports K.'s claim according to which her employers are impressed with her language skills. K. reproduces their praise alongside their statement that they would not have a problem if all black people could speak Greek the way she does. Similar to A. (10), who introduced a figure of authority to signal herself out as exceptional, K. uses her employers' words to claim that she does not share the characteristics of the group she is normatively assigned to. Contrary to the majority of African migrants, she speaks the language very well. Her narrative constitutes an opposition to dominant views and an attempt to claim her own characteristics as part of her own identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2003: 373).

This positive judgement of K.'s language competence introduces a rupture in the group of migrants, which is often seen as homogenous. It is not the black migrant population on the whole that faces discrimination, but only the ones who are not able to communicate in Greek. This incident constitutes an example of polyphony (Bakhtin 1981). By reproducing her interlocutors' words, K. interacts with other discourses, beyond the local context, and introduces macro-structures into the communicative event (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008) while at the same time, she reproduces the dominant discourse according to which ethnic segregation and lack of integration, connected to limited linguistic skills, are seen as migrants' own fault (Cederberg 2014). In order to support a positive self-presentation she is, in other words, not reproducing the values of her own community (cf. Lampropoulou 2012) but the majority's claims.

However, this statement was, probably, never uttered as such. The use of the first-person plural implies that K.'s interlocutors would speak simultaneously. This collective perspective

can be interpreted as K.'s intention to present her employers as members of a group. Their opinions are not individual ones; they constitute examples of shared beliefs. K.'s decision to use the plural form, referring to her employers as *they* and using the pronoun *we* when she reports their opinions, is a strategic decision she makes, aimed at stressing the validity and generalisability of her claims. In this context, the pronoun *we* is used as part of a process of normativity, presenting this statement as typical for the group the speakers belong to (cf. 4.4.1. on the use of the pronoun *we* and the participants' inclusion into bigger groups to present their actions as practices which can be ascribed to group membership).

To sum up, the participants use direct reported speech in incidents related to language competence in order to construct a positive self-presentation. Similar to the findings regarding verbal racist attacks, in the majority of these examples they are in a position of defence, with only diminished ability to act. Despite this context of lacking power, they project an image of themselves as strong and skillful, able and willing to adapt to the norms of their new country of residence. This toughness, usually related with male speakers, is claimed as part of their identities through instances of speech representation. While in the first category of racist verbal attacks, the participants presented a collective perspective by including in their narratives the voices of other family members, here they grant speaking rights to figures of authority (teachers, employers and policemen). These relationships between narrators and other voices are "indexical of particular category-based role relationships" (Baynham and Slembrouk 1999: 441). The speakers' claims are enhanced and validated through their interaction with these figures, while the tellability of the events is increased (Polanyi 1985). In some incidents, these figures' words are reproduced in order to differentiate the narrators from other members of their communities, stressing their positive characteristics and presenting their knowledge as a personal accomplishment. Keeping in mind that the narratives are co-constructed, while in the first category of racist verbal attacks the women aimed at evoking the researcher's solidarity, here they aim at gaining her esteem and respect for what they have accomplished, along with acknowledgment of their power.

6.3.3. Stories of self-disclosure

This category features examples of direct reported speech as part of narratives of self-disclosure, where participants tell a story in order to present themselves as certain kinds of people by making self-identity claims (Georgakopoulou 2010: 123). In the following excerpt,

M., who has no legal documents at the time of the interview, recounts her experience at the immigration office:

(12)

M: If (.) the will of God (.) ah they will give me a better paper (.) because the pink card is not it's not for me (.) it's for refugees (.) I don't like it (.) I don't like it because I go the:re you tell lie:s I came I (.) ah I don't like it.

R: Did you do that?

M: Mhm:: They say <u>where did you come</u> >if you tell you came to join your husband they will say NO< (.) so you have to lie: <u>blahblahblah</u>: and say <u>I went to the No:rth this people they chased me: sososososo</u> ah so don't like all those lies is not really for me.

In this excerpt, M. presents herself as a migrant who is entitled to a residence permit. The pink card, the document she used to hold, is not suitable for her, as she is not a refugee, she claims. Direct speech is used in relation to her experience at the immigration office, where she falsely convinced her interlocutors that she had to flee her country of origin and was, therefore, given a pink card. Both the officers' question, asking her how she came, and her answers are reproduced in the form of a dialogue. Similar to excerpt (7), M. uses the onomatopoeic *blahblahblahblah* to refer to talk that is not worth reproducing, followed by the expression *sososososo*. However, while F. (7) used this derogatory expression when reconstructing the words of others, M. refers to her own words, in retrospect, and classifies them as lies. Here, the derogatory interjection, usually used to characterise other peoples' talk (Mildorf 2008: 294), creates a distance between M.'s old self, who falsely claimed that she was entitled to refugee status, and her present self, who is refraining from lies. This comparison highlights a "measure of distance" from the reported events (Freeman 2006: 142) while it stresses M.'s present identity and her dislike for this kind of lies.

Self-enhancement, a basic function of storytelling (Georgakopoulou 1997), has shaped the content of this excerpt. M. presents a positive image of herself as a truthful person, who prefers to take risks and live without legal status instead of clinging to the slim benefits achieved by lying. This image of M. corresponds to Coates' claims (2003: 73) according to which women typically make themselves vulnerable through stories of self-disclosure by exposing their feelings, while being, at the same time, aware of their vulnerability. M. attributes this vulnerability to a moral stance. The reconstructed dialogue strengthens her position, while God is introduced in the role of the protector. By reproducing this story, M. aims at creating an image the researcher will approve of. Keeping in mind that M. regularly attended the researcher's

language courses, the relationship between the two women, initiated prior to the interview, together with M.'s moral values, motivate the reproduction of direct speech in this excerpt.

Disclosure of a typical female identity and self-enhancement have shaped the following excerpt as well, where A. reconstructs a series of dialogues from the time she was living in Crete and sustaining a relationship with a Greek man:

(13)

A: Όταν βγαίνουμε έ:ξω >με την παρέα του ντάξει< εγώ τότε δεν ήμουνα τόσο χο- ήμουνα πιο αδύνατη από σένα και όταν βγήκαμε έξω όταν οι φίλοι του μου μίλαγε αυτός έχει ΤΟΣΟ νεύρα ναι:: μετά σπάει τα ποτήρια ΜΕΣΑ στο καφενείο

R: Ω::

A: Και δε μπορούσα ντρεπόμουνα (.) πάμε σπίτι και του λέω γιατί κάνεις αυτά τα πράγματα; λέει >γιατί το φίλο του να με πιά:νει;< γιατί να βάλει χέρι πάνω μου; και λέω τι έχεις; έχεις κανένα πρόβλημα; είναι ΦΙΛΟΣ σου δεν κάναμε τίποτα απλά επαίζαμε (.) αφού επίναμε. Λέει όχι.

R: [είναι ζηλιάρης

A: [είναι ζηλιάρης άμα δεις τι κάνει αυτό:ς (.) συνέχεια μου λέει Α. κάτσε στο σπί:τι δεν ήθελε να δουλέψω (.) θέλει απλά ό,τι θέλω θέλει να μου το δί:νει αλλά δε θέλει να δουλέψω. Εγώ θέλω (.) δε μπορώ να κάτσω μες στο σπίτι αυτός να πάει στη δουλειά και να γυρίσει.

(...)

A: Τα πράγματα που δεν έπρεπε να νευριάζει τότε νευρίαζε αυτός συνέχεια μου λέει πάμε έξω (.) του λέω ντά::ξει θα πάμε έξω την ημέρα χαλάμε 200 ευρώ και του λέω >γιατί πάμε έξω;< γιατί χαλάμε 200 ευρώ; εγώ δεν είμαι έναν άνθρωπο τέτοιο εγώ θέλω να είμαι με ένα άνθρωπο τα λεφτά θα πάμε στο σούπερ μάρκετ ψωνί:ζουμε το φτιάχνουμε φαγητό το τρώμε.

(...)

A: Και του είπα αυτό το πράγμα δεν μου αρέσει άμα είναι έτσι γιατί δεν πάμε στο σούπερ μάρκετ να ψωνί:σουμε και γω να φτιάξω το φαγητό και να του πεις να έ:ρθουνε (.) να πάρουμε ένα μπουκάλι κρασί γιατί στην Κρήτη έχουμε φρέσκα πράγματα έχουμε φρέσκα ρακί (.) και είχαμε κρασί στο υπόγειο (.).

(...)

Α: Περάσαμε καλά και αυτός λέει βαριέμαι μέσα στο σπίτι λέω εντάξει άμα βαριέσαι πήγαινε εσύ με τη μηχανή (.) να πιεις κανέναν καφέ και έλα πάλι. Και αυτός δεν πίνει τέτοιο καφέ μόνο ε: μόνο ελληνικό το ελληνικό πίνει. Και αυτός πήγες και όταν γυρνάει (.) άστο (.) όταν τη βλέπεις ανέβει από κάτω στο βουνό (.) γιατί το σπίτι του σαν βουνό όταν είσαι πάνω βλέπεις τη θάλασσα βλέπεις τα ΠΑΝΤΑ (.) είναι σαν είσαι αστέρι πάνω όταν γυρνάει λέω βλέπω: δεν ήπιες καφέ; μυρίζεις αλκοόλ (.) και γω δε μιλάω και λέω ντάξει το φαγητό σου είναι έτοιμο να φας να κοιμηθείς και λέει ντάξει θα φάω.

(A: When we went ou:t >with his friend ok< then I was not so fa- I was thinner than you and when we went out when his friends talk to me he was SO pissed off ye::s then he breaks the glasses INSIDE the coffeehouse.

R: O::h

A: And I couldn't I was ashamed (.) we go home and I tell him why are you doing these things? he says >why should his friend touch me?< why put his hand on me? And I say what's wrong with you? He is your FRIEND we didn't do anything we were just playing (.) since we were drinking. He says no.

R: [He is jealous.

A: [He is jealous if you see what he: does (.) all the time he tells me A. stay at ho:me he didn't want me to work (.) he just wants to gi:ve me whatever I want but he doesn't want me to work. I don't want (.) I can't stay at home he goes to work and comes back.

(...)

A: The things he shouldn't be pissed off then he was pissed off all the time he tells me let's go out (.) I say oka::y we will go out and spend 200 euros a day and I tell him >why do we go out?< why do we spend 200 euros? I am not that kind of person I want to be with a person the money we will go to the supermarket and do the sho:pping and cook the food and eat.

(...)

A: and I told him this thing I don't like if it is like that why don't we go to the super-market and do the sho:pping and I cook the food and you tell them to co:me (.) we will

get a bottle of wine because in Crete we have fresh raki ((Greek word for 'brandy')) (.) and we had wine in the cellar.

(...)

A: We had fun and he says I'm bored inside the house and I say ok if you are bored go with the motorbike (.) to drink a coffee and come back. And he doesn't drink this coffee only e:h only Greek this Greek coffee he drinks. And he went and when he comes back (.) a shame (.) when you see him driving up the mountain (.) because his house is like a mountain when you are up there you see the sea you see EVERYTHING (.) it is like a star up there and he comes back I say I see: you didn't drink coffee? You smell like alcohol (.) and I don't speak and I say ok your food is ready you should eat and go to bed and he says ok I'll eat.)

In this excerpt, A. uses animated dialogue to present herself as a certain kind of person. The setting includes herself and her ex-boyfriend. Both characters are in possession of speaking rights, however, A.'s stretches of talk are much longer than her boyfriend's. Apart from one sentence in the beginning, a manifestation of jealousy, where he asks her for the reasons his friend put his arm around her, the boyfriend's turns are made up of a few words only (and he is often reduced to silence). While he is given limited speaking time, A.'s talk is reproduced in detail. Her utterances contain different speech acts and are merged with her thoughts. She first reacts to his jealousy by explaining that nothing happened and stressing that this person is his friend. His statement urging her not to work is followed by a comment, where A. states that she is bored at home. The image of a strong, independent woman is projected. She then changes the topic and talks about the way he used to waste money, spending as much as 200 euros a day. This attitude provokes her reaction in the story world, and she reports a dialogue where she questions his spending habits. After her questions, she characterises herself through what appears to be a series of thoughts, stating that she is not that kind of person and elaborating on the traits of her character in order to present herself as thrifty and inclined to good housekeeping (*I am not that kind of person I want to be with a person the money we will go to the supermarket and do the sho:pping and cook the food and eat*). These thoughts are repeated a few seconds later, in the form of reported speech (*this thing I don't like if it is like that why don't we go to the super-market and do the sho:pping and I cook the food and you tell them to co:me)*. At this point, the utterance is introduced with the verb *told*; therefore, it constitutes a reproduction of A.'s words. The two sentences, A.'s thought and her reported speech, have similar structure, similar wording and the same content. A. seems to repeat a thought, a mental self-

characterisation, as part of a dialogue spoken in order to increase its validity and stress the image of a "good" woman. Her boyfriend, on the contrary, is presented as irresponsible and emotionally immature. His limited speaking rights and lack of eloquence support this image. The last part of A.'s narrative presents a similar argument. As the boyfriend states that he is bored at home, she urges him to go for a coffee. However, when he comes back, she smells alcohol; a reprimand is followed by a presentation of herself mothering him. No reaction on his side is reproduced and A. keeps the last word for herself.

In this excerpt, gender plays an important role. Already in the beginning, when describing her boyfriend's jealousy, A. comments on her appearance and compares herself with the researcher on matters of weight, stating that back then she was not fat.[104] Through this comment, A. refers to the importance of beauty in the context of a relationship. The character traits she ascribes to herself, a mature, organised and caring woman, and the ones she attributes to her boyfriend, an immature, controlling, jealous man, reflect a typical image of a gendered relationship. Although A. claims a position of power by deciding on the way they should spend money and by disapprovingly reacting to his jealousy, in the end she confirms the stereotype of the woman who prefers to remain silent and avoid conflict. This image is reflected in the way the two characters speak. While the boyfriend refrains from comments and says only what seems necessary, A. elaborates on her thoughts and feelings and aligns to what Coates (2003: 73) has described as a story of self-disclosure, where the female speaker provides indices of female identity and exposes her feelings, while presenting herself as part of a world where people are involved in relationships (Johnstone 1990).

However, this excerpt should be analysed as part of A.'s longer narrative. Shortly after reproducing these episodes, she blames her boyfriend for their eventual break-up. When he stated that he had plans to marry her, A. claims she did not agree and adds that she could not imagine having children with him because of his character. The reconstructed dialogue analysed so far serves as an illustration of the reasons A. broke up with this man, underlining her overall argument and providing it with validity. It constitutes part of the longer narrative of her life, where she is presented as a complex person, who has been through different relationships, until

[104] A. would probably be described as obese according to medical standards. She refers to her weight a couple of times during the interview, either by comparing herself to other, thinner women or by reproducing stories of people who have urged her to lose weight. However, she does not state that she feels uncomfortable with her body. The discursive mentioning of her weight can, therefore, be seen as a reflection of a general tendency to see the body, and especially the fat female body, as a site of social contest (Pitts 2003). It reproduces dominant views and attempts of social control, reflected in size discrimination (Gailey 2014) and going as far as the use of words like epidemic in order to refer to obesity (Murray 2008), implying that it is a disease whose spread should be prevented.

she met her husband, a person she describes as shy and caring. Although in the context of excerpt (13) A. does not seem to have absolute control over the events of her life, on the whole she presents herself as responsible for her fate. Her narrative corresponds to that of a lone hero, who has to fight and manages to succeed, an image male speakers tend to claim for themselves (Coates 2003; Johnstone 1990).

All aforementioned characteristics, along with "an offer to become more intimate" (Bamberg 1997: 341) are found in the following excerpt as well. This dialogue between A. and her boyfriend's mother follows shortly after excerpt (13) and took place after A. decided not to marry the other woman's son:

(14)

Και πήγα στη μάνα του και η μάνα του μου λέει ε: να προσπαθώ: γιατί ο γιος του μ' αγαπάει λέω κι εγώ τον αγαπά αλλά ΕΤΣΙ δεν μπορώ εγώ είμαι μία κοπέλα (.) αγάπη δεν πήρα από τους γονείς μου (.) ένα αγάπη θέλω (.) θέλω έναν άνθρωπος να είναι σαν τη μάνα μου σαν μπαμπά μου σαν τα αδέρφια μου αυτό ζητάω δεν ζητάω κάποιον να είναι μόνο αυτός (xxx) η μάνα του λέει μπράβο κορίτσι μου έτσι πρέπει μια κοπέλα να ζητάει αυτά (.) και του λέω τα λεφτά δε με ενδιαφέρουν (.) τα ΛΕΦΤΑ (.) το βρήκαμε εδώ στη ζωή και όταν φεύγουμε τ' ΑΦΗΝΟΥΜΕ δεν τα παίρνουμε μαζί στον τάφο το είπα στη μάνα του και η μάνα του μου λέει μπράβο ρε κόρη μου ωραία τα λες αλλά ο γιος μου δεν ακούει. ((απογοητευμένη))

(And I went to his mother and his mother tells me e:h to try: because her son loves me I say I love him too but LIKE THAT I can't I am a girl (.) I didn't find love from my parents (.) I just want one love (.) I want a person to be like my mother like my father like my siblings that's what I ask for I don't want someone who will be only (xxx) his mother says well done my girl that's the way a girl should ask for things (.) and I say money does not interest me (.) MONEY (.) we found it here in life and when we go we LEAVE it we don't take it with us to the grave I told his mother and the mother says well said "re" my daughter you put it nicely but my son doesn't listen. ((disappointed))

This excerpt builds on the narrative analysed so far and illustrates A.'s position inside her relationship while indicating her social relations and reflecting her identity. When interacting with her boyfriend's mother, who urges her not to give up on her son, A. uses this statement as a chance to elaborate on her priorities in life and her expectations from a man. Through the reproduction of her own words she projects the image of an emotionally mature woman with a good head on her shoulders, who does not value money but focuses on real love. The mother

agrees with these priorities and praises A. She then states, in a disappointed voice, that her son is hard to convince.

The question concerning the authenticity of this dialogue is hard to answer. However, even if the dialogue did take place, it has, without any doubt, been reshaped by A. in the role of the author, who is reconstructing, editing and resequencing the story she tells (Goffman 1981). Her intention to construct a powerful identity has influenced this act of editing. The ascription of consciousness to her interlocutor, a Cretan mother who is interacting with her son's Nigerian girlfriend, underlines A.'s positive character traits by presenting the inner world of a person who is, traditionally, in a position of power.[105] The suggestion of positive feelings towards her future daughter-in-law aligns to the image of A. as a "good woman" presented so far. According to Bakhtin (1981: 338) "[o]ne must also consider the psychological importance in our lives of what others say about us, and the importance, for us, of understanding and interpreting these words of others". In this example, the mother's words support the argument put forth so far, according to which A. is a woman of high standards and moral values.

When A. reproduces the mother's words, she refers to herself using an idiomatic expression (*"re" my daughter*), signaling affection and underlining the familiar terms the two women are on. At the same time, the use of this expression reflects A.'s trajectory as a migrant and can be seen as part of a "complex of traces of power" (Blommaert and Backus 2013: 29), indicating her movement across space and constituting proof that she had to accumulate certain resources in order to operate within the norms and expectations of social networks (Blommaert and Backus 2013: 29). A. does not use this expression as part of her own words, as this would "not conform to the social category to which she is normatively assigned" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 588). Her language learning trajectory and the social contacts she has had are, nevertheless, reflected in her ease to attribute it to her interlocutor, for whom it is perfectly appropriate. Therefore, she does not "subvert essentialist preconceptions of linguistic ownership" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 588) and creates, at the same time, the image of a competent speaker who masters fine aspects of the pragmatics of Greek, an integrated person

[105] The figure of the mother plays an important role in the traditional Greek family. As a future mother-in-law, she is often considered to exert power over her children concerning their decisions of marriage and family planning and, traditionally, the children would leave home only when they would marry and have children of their own (Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006). While life in urban centers has transformed these family structures, they are still operating in rural settings, like the one A. used to live in, where social personhood is established "through active domestic, consanguineous, and spiritual kin relationships" (Paxson 2004). This position of the mother adds to the importance of her acceptance and praise for A.'s character traits.

and an accepted daughter-in-law to be. The use of the pragmatic marker *re* together with the idiomatic expression *my daughter* serves as an additional indicator of a friendly and intimate relationship between the two women (Karachaliou 2018: 196). On the broader, social level, this discursive marker reflects her identity as an integrated migrant woman living in Crete and sustaining a relationship with a Greek man.

In this episode A. does not refer to her origin. Only some grammatical mistakes differentiate the reported dialogue from another, hypothetical one, where the girlfriend would be white and Greek. Silencing her ethnic membership is a decision made by A. who wants to stress her position as an accepted member of the family she would become part of, if she were to marry her boyfriend. On the whole, turn taking, the use of register and the historical narrative found in the complicating action of the story underline what could be described as an unexpected event (cf. Archakis 2014), namely the fact that even the mother of her boyfriend, a person who would be expected to disapprove of her because she turned her son's marriage proposal down, is on her side.

In the following excerpt, the focus is on N.'s language competence as part of her identity and position in the context of her relationship with a man who does not speak Greek.

(15)

N: If George (.) the other time you see (.) he was coming home and then he said (.) >N. what is the meaning of this?< and I said what is this? he said atiejina atiejina what is that atiejina atiejina? ((laughs)) atiejina atiejina I was (xxx) and then I asked ok what were you doing that they used they used that (.) word for you see? he was do:ing some wo:rk and then he just messed u:p and then the: boss says (.) atiejina atiejina (.) and then I understand that oti ejine ejine ((Greek for 'you cannot change what happened')) ((laughter)) oti ejine ejine ((Greek for 'you cannot change what happened')) atiejina atiejina so sometimes when he comes >he listens to the word and then he comes< ((laughter)) and then I will just ask him (.) what happened (.) because I want to know what happened befo:re they used that word.

In this episode, N. illustrates a claim she made earlier in her narrative, according to which her language competence is superior to her boyfriend's. The characters participating in the story world are N., G. and G.'s boss. When G. comes home from work, he asks N. about the meaning of an expression his boss used earlier that day when addressing him in Greek. As he did not understand the content, he memorised the sound and repeats it to N., asking for her help. In the

beginning N. has difficulties deciphering the boss's words and repeats the sound of the expression, trying to understand it, while laughing. She then asks G. about the context of their interaction in order to guess what the expression could stand for. His description guides her to the answer and in the end she is able to provide him the meaning.

While trying to decipher the expression, N. teases her boyfriend through her words, her laughing and her overall attitude towards his limited language skills. Apart from his question in the beginning, G. does not possess speaking rights. It can be assumed that he did not react when the incident took place neither. While his lack of understanding reduces him to silence, N. claims for herself the role of a linguistic mediator, who is willing to bridge this lack on his side. As translation is not only a form of support but at the same time a means of control, drawing attention to difference and making it visible (Polezzi 2012), N.'s role as a linguistic mediator supports her empowerment. Similar to the findings of other studies on language learning, migration and the redefinition of gender identities (e.g. Gal 1978; Pavlenko 2001; Gordon 2004), N. presents herself as the one who has acquired language competence and is, therefore, in a position of power in the context of her relationship with a man from the same country of origin. The represented speech serves as proof of this competence, and projects the identity of a strong and capable woman, who has adapted well to her new environment.

While in all episodes of self-disclosure analysed so far the women claim a position of power and competence and report their interactions in order to illustrate their claims, the image is different in the following excerpts, where P., a victim of trafficking, narrates her route of migration.

(16)

She[107] *tell me they have shop (.) in Greece (.) she don't even say country they have shop in Europe (.) they make hair she make one hair and she tell me the money in Nigeria: currency the money they use to make hair in Nigeria currency*[108]*. I said I don't have problem (xxx) and when eh: before she le:ft she take my na:me my pho:ne everything (.) I said ok (.) and later she was calling me calling me putti:ng e:h to make me know that*

[107] P. refers to the woman she met in Nigeria, who claimed that she was willing to help her and organized her journey to Greece. This woman is part of a network of trafficking and is married to the man who exploited P. and forced her to work as a prostitute in Greece.

[108] P. refers to Naira, the currency used in Nigeria. The woman converted the amount of money a hairdresser earns in Europe into the currency used in Nigeria in order to impress P. and motivate her to leave Nigeria and start a new life in Europe, where she would earn large sums of money and still work as a hairdresser.

she love me (.) and later she sai:d she call me P. I said yes she said your paper is eh is out >that they want to use to bring me to Europe< I say ah how is it possible? She say of course (.) everything is possible (.) I was so happy. I made my passport me I made my passport they make eh: they make Greek visa (.) inside and they come and said you are leaving tomorrow (xxx) I said is this possible? They said ye:s it is possible (.) they take Germany e:h Lufthansa (.) from Germany they bring me to Greece (.) that's where I met the husband.

In this episode, the words spoken by P. consist of short utterances where she is either reacting to the other woman's words or asking her questions. P.'s dependence on her interlocutor is reflected in the speech acts issued by each character. While P. expresses mainly inquiries and is therefore in need of support and in a position of weakness, the other woman's words include evaluations and decisions, presenting her as knowledgeable and strong. The switch from first person singular (*she*) to first person plural (*they*) in the course of the story underlines P.'s lack of agency. Her journey implies a loss of freedom and P. presents herself in a passive role. However, she is not excluded from decision-making. She is granted speaking rights and is taking part in the process, willingly following the other woman's instructions.

This image changes in the following excerpt, where P. describes her experience in Greece, when she was forced to work as a prostitute after her traffickers had taken all her documents from her. The episode reconstructs the first night she went to work in a strip club, accompanied by another girl who was assigned as her chaperone and was working for the same trafficker:

(17)

P: They tell her to take me along with her to the place where she is working. And in the evening I went with her in one place Philadelphia (.) Philadelphia there was a bar called e::h e::h (6) the man that have this club also have Showcase there was a place to dance they call it Showcase (xxx) they were dancing they were doing pole >I haven't do this before< HOW I will be able I was just crying. And one e:h Nigeria: girl was there. She said why are you crying? It's here how you will work >yes everybody know it's difficult< but (.) you have to try your best because if you don't work for this man when he get you he will beat you if you don't take anything. I was just like this and late:r (.) they went to the DJ they said P. this DJ >the DJ was a Greek man< they say please this woman this girl is ne:w she has not do please you have to put in her music close to my music so that when I finish dance station she will be watching me so that (.) she ca:n >use my step to dance<. So this this this girl was Jessica (.) after she dance she tell me

she was looking at me she said there is no point doesn't mean if you don't know how to dance (.) you can just slip on the floor start romancing yourself as if you are with man in the bed you know. Later (xxx) my music I just climb the stage I don't know how to do it. After the closing time they give me the money. I don't even know euro I don't know THEN I don't know this money. Is that first time I see the money in my eyes. When I take i:t I take the money home my boss will say YES YES let the money tomorrow be higher like that. That's how I find myself here I don't know even know if there is something like Gree:ce (.) Spain France I don't know.

This episode includes three characters, P., a woman working at the strip club named Jessica, and the trafficker. While P. remains silent throughout the episode, Jessica's interactions with P. and the DJ are reproduced in detail. In the beginning, when P. is crying, Jessica is depicted showing solidarity and trying to comfort her. She turns to the DJ and asks for a certain song to play when P.'s turn to dance comes. The DJ's reaction is not reproduced. Jessica then turns again to P. and starts instructing her on the way she should dance, encouraging her and giving her practical advice. On the whole, Jessica's words bear a tone of familiarity. The women's common origin, which is mentioned when P. introduces Jessica into her narrative, underlines this relationship. The use of the discourse marker *you know* at the end of Jessica's reported utterance further stresses this bond and the common ground between the two women (Mildorf 2008). P. does not reproduce her experience of dancing that night. She moves straight away to her trafficker's reaction when she gave him the money she had earned. His words, congratulating her and urging her to gain more the next day, are reproduced in direct speech as well. The coda of the story (cf. Labov 1972), where P. concludes by saying this is how she came to Greece, presents the episode as part of the longer narrative of P.'s experience as a victim of trafficking, who was brought to Greece without any prior knowledge of her destination or of the work she was expected to do.

While P. is lacking speaking rights, the other girl, who has been working as a prostitute for a while, is attributed long stretches of talk. Although she admits that in the beginning this work is difficult, she is not presented as a victim. On the contrary, she is depicted as self-conscious when speaking both with P. and with the DJ, a Greek man, as P. states. Jessica's solidarity towards the new girl and her eloquence when speaking with a Greek interlocutor present her as strong despite the circumstances she finds herself in. P., on the contrary, is depicted as silent and weak. This image is stressed by a represented thought, where she asks herself how she is supposed to do that work. This utterance, which interrupts the action of the

story and conveys a feeling of impotence, functions as an external evaluation of the narrated events (Georgakopoulou and De Fina 2012: 186).[109] P.'s additional comments on her overall lack of knowledge, as she had, for example, no prior experience with the currency used in Greece before the night of the incident, underline her vulnerability. However, despite the position she finds herself in, P. is not alone. On the third, social level of analysis, the two women are presented as part of a network of women who work in similar places and share comparable experiences. The ease of communication together with the solidarity and support P. receives from Jessica illustrate the way this network works. By including other women with similar experiences, P.'s fate is presented as collective while the trafficker is depicted as exploiting a large number of women, all of whom are victims.

Similar to other excerpts analysed so far, in this episode P. reconstructs in detail the words of her story's characters. Together with quoted speech, these details constitute a performance device used by speakers who aim at presenting a lively episode (Georgakopoulou and De Fina 2012: 64). This goal is supported by the narrator's reference to specific times and places. P. first refers to the neighbourhood where the strip club was located (*Philadelphia*). As already mentioned in 5.4.1.1, the use of this toponym stands as tangible proof of P.'s trajectory and can be related to her claim for asylum. The mentioning of the other woman's name (*Jessica*) constitutes a second detail,[110] which together with the name of another strip club owned by the same person (*Showcase*) aims at creating involvement, as it supports the audience's imagination, "reinforc[ing] the hearer's sense of vividness of the memory, and therefore its reportability and authenticity." (Tannen 1989: 139).[111]

Keeping in mind the broader social level, positioning of herself as a victim of trafficking and support for her claim for asylum have motivated the reproduction of this incident by P. who is interacting with the researcher, a woman she met at the UAWO during one of their meetings. P. had approached the Organisation to ask for support, as she found herself in an extremely

[109] Vincent and Perrin (1999) refer to comments which have no influence on the outcome of a story, reproducing judgments or opinions, as appreciative.

[110] While the other woman is given a name, the owners of the strip club, who paid her when she finished her work, are referred to as *they*. The adoption of this collective perspective stresses the women's lack of agency. Similar to the findings of De Fina (2003b: 138) on narratives of border crossings, where the migrants used the pronoun *they* to collectively refer to smugglers, P. uses this pronoun to refer to those who are part of the network which was exploiting her.

[111] Georgakopoulou and De Fina (2012: 72) attribute this use of details to the prevailing cultural attitude towards factuality.

complicated situation.[112] This relationship between P. and the researcher prior to the interview has created the background against which P. stresses her need for support. The use of direct speech further pursues this goal, while the narrator refrains from direct evaluation and lets the researcher decide on the plausibility of her claims and her potential entitlement to protection.

To sum up, in stories of self-disclosure, the participants use direct reported speech in order to claim positive, strong identities, and project an image of vulnerability, together with self-enhancement. While M. (excerpt 12) and A. (excerpts 13 and 14) present themselves as good, moral beings, N. (excerpt 15) focuses on her skills and projects the identity of a competent migrant and P. (excerpts 16 and 17) stresses her identity as a victim, who has succeeded in continuing her life despite her experience of exploitation. The sustention of positive relationships with their interlocutors in the story world is used to support the women's identity claims. If the incidents are seen as part of the participants' longer narratives, in stories of self-disclosure direct reported speech is used to illustrate the participants' overall argumentation and their positioning in the broader, social context while adding a performative element and therefore highlighting certain parts of their stories.

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the use of direct reported speech in the women's narratives and to relate this linguistic structure to acts of identification. According to the findings, the participants use this mechanism of dramatisation mainly when they narrate experiences of verbal racists attacks, incidents related to language competence and during stories of self-disclosure. In all three categories, speech representation is part of an act of performance in front of an audience. At the same time, the women present certain experiences as noteworthy and claim strong identities. In the incidents reproduced the participants grant speaking rights both to themselves and to other characters, presenting themselves as social beings, who are part of social networks and act accordingly. These acts of positive self-presentation through speech representation, together with an implicit evaluation of other characters involved in the women's stories, aim at evoking the researcher's solidarity and respect. The results of the analysis support the description of narratives as co-constructions, as

[112] After the trafficker was arrested, it came out that as many as ten women had been brought to Greece with the same passport. This practice of using one woman's documents for the travel of numerous others was common, according to P. Until a decision on the women's claims for asylum was made, they all lacked legal documents. During this time of waiting, P. met a Nigerian man in Athens and had a child with him. As she did not have a pink card and was not insured, she used the health insurance card of another black woman in order to go to the hospital and deliver her baby. Consequently, the hospital gave the child the surname of the other woman and P. did not appear as his mother on any document. The complications arising from this situation spread to various domains of their life.

the researcher's presence is found to have influenced the ways the women tell their stories, the words they reconstruct, and the identities they project. Finally, in the examples analysed, gender plays an important role in the construction of situated identities. Despite their vulnerability and the difficulties they face, the women's perspective and the overall structure of their stories corresponds to what has been described as the traditionally male image of a bold and courageous narrator who has control over the events, further adding to the identity of a strong person who is able to successfully navigate her environment in her new country of residence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1. Introduction

This thesis has focused on the narrative self-presentations of Nigerian, Ghanaian and Sierra Leonian female migrants living in Athens. Through the analysis of stories told during semi-structured interviews, it has shown how members of these communities strategically manipulate linguistic structures in order to claim identities and position themselves in relation to their interlocutor and to the various groups they are related with. Power, agency and the wider social context were found to influence these acts of positioning. In particular, the study has focused on pronominal choices, spatial deixis and represented speech. As all three structures constitute examples of flexible, indexical signs, their analysis was expected to provide evidence on the women's negotiation of identity characteristics in interaction. This chapter summarises the main findings of the research. After a discussion of its key findings and arguments, it reflects on the role of the researcher and it concludes with an exploration of possible ways forward for future research.

7.2. Key findings

West African female migrant narratives were found to constitute sites of identity construction and negotiation. Contrary to dominant views, which treat migrants in simplistic ways and attribute them to certain groups based solely on their external characteristics, the results of this study present the participants' narrative identities as neither rigid nor straightforward. They were found to be flexible structures, which were manipulated strategically by the women according to the context of the interaction, the overall argument of the narrative, their interlocutor's views and the wider social context.

7.2.1. Pronominal use

As far as pronominal choices are concerned, the analysis focused on the first person plural pronoun *we*, which indicates group membership and is, therefore, seen as a means to ground abstract identity categories in processes of self-identification. By including themselves into

certain groups, speakers claim membership and foreground boundaries. Pronominal choices are, therefore, related to claims for belonging and voice. In the context of dominant discourses, which attribute migrants to groups regardless of their differences, these acts of self-inclusion can constitute not only claims for membership but also sites of resistance against hegemonising discourses.

In the dataset under analysis, the speakers' pronominal choices were found to include them into different groups and resulted in the construction of complex, hybrid identities. Claims for group membership were motivated by various factors, depending on the context of the interaction and the participants' goals. According to the findings, the women presented themselves as members of the numerically large groups of African migrants and/or migrants from the same country of origin when claiming normality for their actions. In these contexts, they stressed the homogeneity of these groups as an argument in favor of their cultural practices. During acts of citizenship and claims for belonging, they activated a variety of referents, and claimed both an African identity and membership to subgroups of Greeks, living in different parts of the country. Language competence was found to influence these claims, and the women related access to Greek citizenship with knowledge of the language. The collective first person plural perspective was also adopted when the women described experiences of verbal racist attacks. In these contexts, group membership functioned as a form of protection. While so far the results presented a complex picture of belonging, and membership shifted depending on the speakers' interactional intentions, when claiming positive characteristics the women included themselves almost exclusively into their ethnic groups. As ethnic background remains hidden when migrants of colour interact with the Greek population, which assigns them the simplistic, homogenising identity of being African, these claims constitute acts of resistance against the majority's views. At the same time, they reflect the women's desire to give voice to their ethnic backgrounds, which are silenced in the context of migration. The privileged status of ethnic identity for purposes of self-identification becomes obvious.

7.2.2. Spatial deixis

While pronominal choices presented the women as members of different networks, the narrative use of space reflected their attachment to different geographical locations. The default use of the deictic *here*, referring to the women's location at the time of the interview,

was often coupled with a positive affective stance, underlining their sense of belonging to their country of residence. Through this symbolic function and their positive relation with space, the women presented themselves as active agents, who are in control of their lives. Despite the difficulties they face, their migration to Greece was rated in a positive way and their identities did not align with the liminality often projected on them. Apart from its default meaning, the deictic *here* was also used when the women referred to their country of origin. This anchoring of the self in a space other than their country of residence through deictic transposition, enabled the women to narratively connect their past and present lives by fusing chronotopes. Through these connections they linked migration to Greece with their biographical life stories. The image of hybrid identities, which resist simplistic notions of belonging, arises.

The aforementioned complexity is reflected in the amplitude of spatial comparisons both between Greece and country of origin and between Greece and other European countries. In the majority of comparisons between Greece and country of origin, the first was associated with security and access to basic goods and services, while the latter was described in a negative way. Through these comparisons the women present their decision to migrate in a positive way, as leaving their country of origin provided them with a safe home. As far as identity construction is concerned, these comparisons project an image of the participants as people who have managed to change their fate. The identity of a strong and active woman is, therefore, created. The image changes when Greece is compared with other European countries. Through these comparisons, which result in a mostly negative image of Greece, the participants' personal difficulties are, at least partly, attributed to the conditions in their country of residence. Similar to the findings concerning pronominal use, where the women used the collective pronoun *we* to include themselves into a group of people who collectively face hostility, spatial deixis and comparisons were used to reduce personal responsibility by foregrounding the difficulties all migrants face. This complex image reflects the contradictions and ambivalence which is pivotal in migrant experience, with the women being connected in a positive way to Greece, as their country of residence, while feeling, at the same time, attached to other, multiple objects of belonging. The concept of home played an important role in these acts of anchoring the self in space.

Apart from spatial deixis, the narratives of the women were found to contain a large number of references to specific locations, mostly neighbourhoods, which were mentioned by their names. As toponyms are closely related to processes of positioning, place-making

and home, their analysis reflects parts of the women's identities which are not openly discussed during the interview. According to the findings, by discursively relating themselves to certain locations in the city of Athens, the women claimed the identity of working, religious migrants, who have created a home in their country of residence, while moving around the city and anchoring their lives in different ways around Omonia square, a hub of immigrant life in Athens. Moreover, through the use of toponyms the participants presented themselves using urban space according to their daily needs and stressed their feeling of stability, creating the image of people who have arrived at their destination. The liminality of their lives, which is often projected on them, is, in other words, not the focus of their narratives, especially in relation to space, and therefore not a form of identity they want to emphasise.

7.2.3. Speech representation

The last chapter of data analysis focused on speech representation, the reproduction of other people's words and their inclusion into the participants' narratives. This mechanism has been found to hold a central position in personal stories, allowing narrators to change perspective and adopt different roles. The focus on direct reported speech was motivated by the amplitude of this structure in the dataset and its resulting significance in identity construction. The analysis aimed at assessing which acts were given salience and were, therefore, reproduced by the participants in the context of their interaction with the researcher. To this end, topics, speaker roles, degrees of initiative, speaking rights, interactional goals and wider social relations informed the analysis.

According to the findings, the participants used direct reported speech mainly when they were recounting instances of verbal racist attacks, experiences related to language competence, and during stories of self-disclosure. In the category of verbal racist attacks, direct reported speech was used in order to present the speakers as part of networks of social relations and at the same time as active agents, who are not afraid to speak up and defend themselves when insulted in public space. In incidents related to language competence, direct reported speech underlined the women's positive self-presentation, as they projected an image of themselves as strong and skillful, able and willing to adapt to the norms of their new country of residence. A similar positive, strong identity was claimed in stories of self-disclosure.

In all three categories analysed, speech representation was used in order to dramatise an experience and foreground the participants' positive identity characteristics. At the same time, through the reproductions of their words alongside the words of their interlocutors in the story world, the women stressed their identities as social beings and granted speaking rights both to themselves and to other characters in their stories. These acts of positive self-presentation together with an implicit evaluation of the other characters aimed at evoking the researches solidarity and respect. Gender was found to play an important role. Despite their vulnerability and the difficulties they face, the women's perspective and the overall structure of their stories corresponded to what has been described as the traditionally male image of a bold and courageous narrator who has control over the events. This perspective added further to the identity of a strong person who is able to successfully navigate her environment. Although the examination of prosody was not included in the study's design, its significance in instances of speech representation led to its inclusion in the analysis.

7.2.4. Acts of resistance and voice(s)

The participants' discursive inclusion into different groups, their activation of places through mechanisms of indexicality and their reproduction of words spoken in other contexts, are all related to their claims for complex, hybrid identities. In their narratives the women were found to manipulate their status as migrants coming from their countries of origin. They occasionally stressed their differential belongings alongside the knowledge they acquired in the context of migration, and they activated places in order to reach interactional goals in the here and now of their communication with the researcher. Group membership, space and voicing were strategically manipulated and while, in certain contexts, the focus was set on the participants' difficulties and the hostile environment they face, the image of them as strong, skillful women, who shape their lives and pursue their goals, prevails.

In this context, the participants' narratives can be seen as acts of resistance against dominant views which perceive migrants as weak and passive. In their self-presentations the women do not seem to be willing to accept this victimisation. They resist an image of passivity by foregrounding their ethnic group membership, by claiming their presence in space and their belonging to their country of residence, and by granting voice to themselves alongside other characters in their narratives. These acts of resistance constitute, at the same time, claims for the women's cultural, linguistic and ethnic background, all of which are

often ignored in the context of migration. Consequently, through their narratives the women claim the voice(s) of the different groups they belong to and resist, at the same time, the dominant image of themselves being in need of protection.

7.2.5. The role of the researcher

In the analysis of all three linguistic structures the presence of the researcher was found to influence the participants' discursive construction of identities. This influence of the researcher on the data is in line with the study's theoretical framework, according to which in all interactions the audience does not figure as a passive recipient. Narratives are, on the contrary, co-constructions of those taking part in interaction (cf. De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008) and the audience's role is crucial in shaping the way the narrator tells her/his story, resulting in the setting of a focus, in different modifications and in specific forms of presentation (Ochs and Capps 2001). The influence of the audience on the data is more striking when the relation between interviewer and interviewee includes differences in hierarchy and social positioning, and in these contexts, the centrality of the interviewer in the production of talk should not be underestimated (Rapley 2001). Despite the long period of familiarisation with the population and the fact that the researcher always expressed positive feelings about migrants and openly supported their claims to belong alongside the political goals of the United African Women's Organisation, the relation between researcher and subjects of the study remained asymmetrical throughout the research encounter. Therefore, the projection of the identities analysed so far, should always be seen in association with the researcher's presence. This element of co-construction was taken into consideration in the design of the study and the analysis of the data, and the identities described in the findings are only valid in the context of the participants interacting with this specific researcher, a white, Greek, female in her thirties, conducting research, working as a teacher of Greek as a foreign language and actively supporting the United African Women's Organisation.

7.3. Ways forward

This study focused on the analysis of a limited number of linguistic structures. It has been able only to touch upon other factors found in the data, which influence communication, but whose detailed analysis went beyond the study's scope. Therefore, it has inevitably not been

able to comprehensively describe the participants' linguistic ideologies, their use of language, or the implications other linguistic and/or paralinguistic factors might have on the discursive construction of identities. One such area that would benefit from further research is the systematic analysis of prosody in migrant narratives. In this study prosody was only analysed in examples where its manipulation was extremely salient and where it resulted in the projection of certain forms of identities. However, a systematic exploration of prosody as an identity marker was not included in the study's design. As the data indicate that the participants manipulate pitch and prosody in various contexts in a systematic way, the analysis of these variations, the search for recurrent patterns, and the resulting identity claims constitute a promising field of research.

One of the factors which could be manipulated in a similar study's design is gender. Although I am convinced that the exclusive focus on women created a bond of female solidarity, which facilitated my access to the community and resulted in the participants' openness and willingness to share their experiences, a similar, comparative study which would focus on the narratives of West-African men would be not only interesting but also complementary to the findings of this research. As gender shapes the experience of migration, the position of the speaker and the construction of situated identities in the course of the research encounter, changes in the participants' gender are expected to provide interesting insights into the community of West-African migrants on the whole. Moreover it would highlight gender differences and the ways they influence the linguistic construction of identities by male and female members of the group.

As the researcher has been found to influence the findings, a similar study would benefit from changes in the design of the research encounter. The analysis of group discussions, where various members of the community would be present and would interact with each other, is expected to reduce the effect of the researcher's presence and provide interesting insights concerning the way the women discursively construction the self when interacting with members of their communities. The identities constructed in this context would be complementary to the findings of this study. Similar holds for the analysis of instances of spontaneous speech.

The findings of this study demonstrate that structures of oppression intersect with positive self-presentations, and West-African migrant women were found to discursively claim strong identities and resist the dominant discourse of liminality and victimisation. All aforementioned areas of possible future research would add to our understanding of West-

African migrant identities as part of migrant identities on the whole. From a wider perspective, further research focusing on the self-presentations of those who are usually deprived of voice, would add to our understanding of the worlds these ‘Others’ inhabit.

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